

INDIAN-AMERICAN VIEWS OF LINCOLN

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ATTITUDES ABOUT SLAVERY

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# Slavery

## Attitudes about Slavery

### African-American Views of Lincoln

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
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*Chicago Daily Tribune 2/11/59*  
**THE GREAT EMANCIPATOR.**

If all misleading leaders and cruel dictators would follow the noble deeds of Lincoln we should have a fine and pleasant world to live in. No matter of what creed, color or race, all were equal to him. He abolished slavery, as he detested oppression and prejudice, but loved to seek justice for all people in pursuit of happiness to mankind and humanity. The monuments of the righteous are their noble deeds. Thus is the everlasting monument of Abraham Lincoln.

Chicago. ANNA GOLDBERG.

**Going to Meet Abraham Lincoln.**

(From the Boston Record.)

The oldest old maid in the world, a woman named Benoite, has been discovered at Auch, in France. She is 109 years old, born the year before our Declaration of Independence. She was grown up when Napoleon passed through her native village, and the Hundred Days seem only a little while ago to her. The oldest colored woman in this country died not long ago in Chicago, aged 115 years. To a white woman who visited and aided her she said not long before her death: "Oh, honey, I'm a gwine to glory, an' when I git dar, I'm a gwine to see massa Lincoln; yes, honey," and all the adoration of the American blacks for the man who freed them shone in her eyes as she said it: "Yes, honey, jes' as soon as I've had a chance to say howdy do to de good Lord, I'm gwine to hunt up Massa Lincoln an' shake hands with him."—December 24, 1886.

## EXAMPLE TO NEGRO RACE, SAYS BOOKER WASHINGTON

New York, February 12.—Booker T. Washington delivered an address on Abraham Lincoln before the republican club of New York at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel today. He said:

"To my race, the life of Abraham Lincoln has its special lesson at this point in our career. Insofar as his life emphasizes patience, long-suffering, sincerity, natureless, dogged determination and courage; courage to avoid the superficial; courage to persistently seek the substance instead of the shadow, it points the road for my people to travel.

"As a race we are learning, I believe, in an increasing degree, that the best way for us to honor the memory of our emancipator is by seeking to imitate him. Like Lincoln, the negro race should seek to be simple, without bigotry and without ostentation. There is great power in simplicity. Great men are usually simple men. Great races are those that strive after simplicity. We, as a race, should, like Lincoln, have moral courage to be what we are, and not pretend to be what we are not. We should keep in mind that no one can degrade us except ourselves; that if we are worthy no influence can defeat us. Like other races, the negro will often meet obstacles, often be sorely tried and tempted, but we must keep in mind that freedom, in the broadest

and highest sense, has never been a bequest; it has been a conquest.

"In the final test the success of our race will be in proportion to the service that it renders to the world. In the long run the badge of service is the badge of sovereignty.

"In paying my tribute of respect to the great emancipator of my race I desire to say a word here and now in behalf of an element of brave and true white men of the south who, though they saw in Lincoln's policy the ruin of all they believed in and hoped for, have loyally accepted the results of the civil war and are today working with a courage few people in the north can understand to uplift the negro in the south and complete the emancipation that Lincoln began. I am tempted to say that it certainly required as high a degree of courage for men of the type of Robert E. Lee and John B. Gordon to accept the results of the war in the manner and spirit which they did as that which Grant and Sherman displayed in fighting the physical battles that saved the union.

"Lincoln also was a southern man by birth, but he was one of those white men of whom there is a large and growing class who resented the idea that in order to assert and maintain the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race it was necessary that another group of humanity should be kept in ignorance."

Institution (Washington, D.C.)

2/13/09

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# CHEER FORMER SLAVE AS HE LAUDS LINCOLN

**Booker T. Washington Pays a  
Remarkable Tribute to the  
Man Who Set Him Free.**

## MOTHER'S PRAYER HEARD

**She Awakened Him One Night Praying  
for the Emancipator—Former  
Owner's Grandson Hears Speech.**

Booker T. Washington, Principal of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, a negro, born a slave, stood in the grand ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria last night at the Republican Club's annual Lincoln dinner, and, in the presence of the grandson of the master who once owned him, paid a glowing tribute to the man who had set him free, the emancipator of his race. So remarkable was the tribute and so evident the deep feeling of the speaker that the audience of eight hundred white men, who but a few moments before had loudly applauded the strains of "Dixie," arose and cheered the colored man's speech.

The dinner, next to that given to President Roosevelt four years ago, was the largest of the Lincoln dinners that the club has held. The speakers were few in number. Senator-elect Burton of Ohio and Congressman James Francis Burke of Pennsylvania preceded Dr. Washington, and they, Rev. Dr. Howard Duffield followed him. All the speakers had words of praise and appreciation to bestow on the memory of Lincoln, but for obvious reasons the chief interest attached to the speech of Dr. Washington.

When Dr. Washington rose to speak he was warmly applauded, and there was a manifest air of curiosity. The speaker said, in part:

"You ask that which he found a piece of property and turned into a free American citizen to speak to you to-night of Abraham Lincoln. I am not fitted by ancestry or training to be your teacher to-night; for, as I have stated, I was born a slave.

### Heard Mother Pray for Lincoln.

"My first knowledge of Abraham Lincoln came in this way: I was awakened one mornning by my mother praying that Abraham Lincoln might succeed and that one day she and her boy might be free. You give me the opportunity here this evening to celebrate with you and the Nation the answer to that prayer. [Applause.]

"Says the Great Book somewhere, 'Though a man die, yet shall he live.' If this is true of the ordinary man, how much more true is it of the hero of the hour and the century—Abraham Lincoln! One hundred years of the life and influence of Lincoln is the story of the struggles, the trials, ambitions, and triumphs of the people of our complex American civilization. Knit into the life of Abraham Lincoln is the story and success of the Nation in the blending of all tongues, religions, colors, races, into one, composite nation, leaving each group and race free to live its own separate social life, and yet all a part of the great whole.

"The signing of the Emancipation Proclamation was a great event, and yet it was but the symbol of another, still greater and more momentous. We who celebrate this anniversary should not forget that the same pen that gave freedom to 4,000,000 of African slaves at the same time struck the shackles from the souls of 27,000,000 of Americans of another color. [Applause.]

"In abolishing slavery Lincoln proclaimed the principle that, even in the case of the humblest and weakest of mankind, the welfare of each is still the

good of all. In re-establishing in this country the principle that, at bottom, the interests of humanity and of the individual are one, he freed men's souls from spiritual bondage.

"Henceforth no man of any race, either in the North or in the South, need feel constrained to fear or hate his brother. By the same token that Lincoln made America free, he pushed back the boundaries of freedom everywhere, gave the spirit of liberty a wider influence throughout the world, and re-established the dignity of man as man. [Applause.]

"By the same act that freed my race he said to the civilized and uncivilized world that man everywhere must be free, and that man everywhere must be enlightened, and the Lincoln spirit of freedom and fair play will never cease to spread and grow in power until throughout the world all men shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free.

"People so often forget that by every inch that the lowest man crawls up he makes it easier for every other man to get up. To-day, throughout the world, because Lincoln lived, struggled, and triumphed, every boy who is ignorant, in poverty, despised, or discouraged, holds his head a little higher. His heart beats a little faster, his ambition to do something and be something is a little stronger, because Lincoln blazed the way.

### Asks His Race to be Simple.

"Like Lincoln, the negro race should seek to be simple, without bigotry and without ostentation. There is great power in simplicity. We, as a race, should, like Lincoln, have moral courage to be what we are, and not pretend to be what we are not.

"We should keep in mind that no one can degrade us except ourselves; that if we are worthy no influence can defeat us. Like other races, the negro will often meet obstacles, often be sorely tried and tempted, but we must keep in mind that freedom, in the broadest and highest sense, has never been a bequest; it has been a conquest. In the final test the success of our race will be in proportion to the service that it renders to the world. In the long run the badge of service is the badge of sovereignty. [Applause.]

"In paying my tribute of respect to the great emancipator of my race, I desire to say a word here and now in behalf of an element of brave and true white men of the South who, though they saw in Lincoln's policy the ruin of all they believed in and hoped for, have loyally accepted the results of the civil war and are to-day working with a courage few people in the North can understand to uplift the negro in the South and complete the emancipation that Lincoln began.

"I am tempted to say that it certainly required as high a degree of courage for men of the type of Robert E. Lee and John B. Gordon to accept the results of the war in the manner and spirit which they did as that which Grant and Sherman displayed in fighting the physical battles that saved the Union."

Mr. Washington expressed his gratitude at being present at the club's dinner. He said he was glad to meet so many distinguished men, and especially glad to be in the company of one with whom he had played as a child, the grandson of the man who had once been his owner, A. H. Burroughs.

It was learned later that Mr. Burroughs, who was at the President's table, was only a lad when Dr. Washington saw him last. He met him only a few days ago for the first time since the emancipation proclamation was signed.

Continuing his speech, Mr. Washington said in part:

"Lincoln lives to-day because he had the courage which made him refuse to hate the man at the South or the man at the North when they did not agree with him. He had the courage as well as the patience and foresight to suffer in silence, to refuse to revile when reviled. For he knew that if he was right the ridicule of to-day would be the applause of to-morrow. He knew, too, that at some time in the distant future our Nation would repent of the folly of cursing our

public servants while they live and blessing them only when they die.

"In this connection I cannot refrain from suggesting the question to the millions of voices raised to-day in his praise, 'Why did you not say it yesterday?'—yesterday, when one word of approval and gratitude would have meant so much to him in strengthening his hand and heart. [Applause.]

"As we gather here, brothers all, in common joy and thanksgiving for the life of Lincoln, may I not ask that you, the worthy representatives of 70,000,000 of white Americans, join heart and hand with the 10,000,000 of black Americans—these 10,000,000 who speak your tongue, profess your religion—who have never lifted their voices or hands except in defense of their country's honor and their country's flag. [Applause.] and swear eternal fealty to the memory and the traditions of the sainted Lincoln?

"I repeat, may we not join with your race and let all of us here highly resolve that justice, good-will, and peace shall be the motto of our lives? If this be true, Lincoln shall not have lived and died in vain.

"And, finally, gathering inspiration and encouragement from this hour and Lincoln's life, I pledge to you and to the Nation that my race, in so far as I can speak for it, which, in the past, whether in ignorance or intelligence, whether in slavery or in freedom, has always been true to the Stars and Stripes and to the highest and best interests of this country, will strive to so deport itself that it shall reflect nothing but the highest credit upon the whole people in the North and in the South."

### No Cheers for Roosevelt.

The great ballroom was a mass of American flags, the decorations for the dinner being composed entirely of the National colors and potted plants. Every box in the galleries was filled with women when Charles H. Younge, President of the club, brought the diners to attention with his gavel and introduced Congressman Burton.

Mr. Burton called attention to the fact that the attendance at the various Lincoln celebrations in this city yesterday was probably greater than the attendance at any tribute ever paid to any man, living or dead. Surely, he said, the event sounded a note of optimism. Never a King or Emperor had done so much for a race or for a country as Lincoln had, he said.

"He was the embodiment of the people; the very incarnation of the people," he went on. "It was not necessary for him to keep his ear to the ground. He knew the people. He was one of them. There have been other Presidents, more aggressive, more dominating, [laughter.] but Lincoln understood public opinion as no other President had ever understood it."

Congressman Burke of Pennsylvania, the next speaker, spoke of having visited Ann Rutledge's grave, then responded to the toast, "The Republican Party."

"That organization, he said, would have amounted to naught had it not been for Lincoln, while, on the other hand, had it not been for the Republican Party, Lincoln might have missed his great opportunity."

He spoke of President-elect Taft, and the crowd gave a hearty cheer. He mentioned Gov. Hughes, and an even louder cheer was given. So with Root and with McKinley, whom Mr. Burke eulogized at some length. He did not mention President Roosevelt by name, but referred to him indirectly as the world's great peace-maker, but there were no cheers. Nor had there been a single cheer when, at the outset, President Younge had proposed a toast to the President.

The last speaker of the evening, Dr. Duffield, spoke on "The State of New York."

Practically every Republican of prominence in the city was present. At the guest table, in addition to the speakers, were William L. Ward, L. A. Coolidge, Col. John J. McCook, Henry Mitchell MacCracken, Levi P. Morton, George R. Sheldon, Congressman Herbert Parsons, Louis Stern, Gen. Henry E. Tremain, and A. H. Burroughs.

### The Menu.

This was the menu at the dinner:  
Huitres de Coint.  
Consomme Diablotin.  
Tortue Verte Claire.  
Rais. Olives. Oeufs. Amandes Salees.  
Escalope de Bass a la Duchesse.  
Pommes Parisienne.  
Ris de Veau. Lafayette.  
Tranche de Dinde Farcie. Sauce Diable.  
Pommes de Terre Sautees. Petits Pots Verts.  
Sorbet Fraise.  
Canard a Tete Rousse. Salade de Saison.  
Glaces Assorties. Fruits pour Fruits. Cafe.  
Rhum Brut.  
Apollinaire.



*Kansas City Journal*  
*Post Feb 12 '25*

### ***Three Ex-Slaves Bow in Lincoln's Memory***

BOSTON, Feb. 12.—The spirit of Abraham Lincoln hovered today about three aged women—formerly slaves—at St. Monica's home in Roxbury.

Nowhere was his memory on his birthday honored with greater adoration than in the humble, silent reverence of these women.

One of them, Fannie Banks, is believed by the Catholic sisters at the home to be 117 years old.

"God and Lincoln was good to me," she said today. "Lincoln set me free so's I could work for myself and have shoes for my feet."

The other former slaves are Amanda Shepard, 87, and Louisa Green, 83.

Banks, Fannie  
Green, Louisa  
Shepherd, Amanda

## At 117, Woman Who Once Was Slave Prays in Memory of Emancipator

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Feb. 12.—

Thousands of visitors journeyed from every part of the nation to-day to Springfield, home of Abraham Lincoln, to pay tribute to his memory.

Among the visitors were 5,000 members of the Order De Molay and representatives of many civic and social organizations.

Memorial services were held in the Sangamon County Court House, Dr. John H. Finley, of New York, being the chief speaker.

*N.Y. American* 2/13/25



# LINCOLN DISCUSSED BY NEGRO PASTOR

The Rev. Henry Hugh Proctor  
Occupies Pulpit of Plymouth  
Congregational Church

## SPOT SOURCE OF FREEDOM

Historic Incidents of Beecher  
Pastorate Recalled

The Rev. Dr. Henry Hugh Proctor, pastor of the Nazarene Congregational Church, Brooklyn (Negro), yesterday addressed the members of the Plymouth Congregational Church at the invitation of Dr. J. Stanley Durkee, pastor.

Dr. Proctor was elected Moderator of the New York Association of Congregational Churches last year, this being the first time a Negro minister was elected as head of one of the most important organizations of the Congregational Churches of America, composed largely of white members. Members of Dr. Proctor's congregation worshipped with the Plymouth Church congregation at the invitation of Dr. Durkee.

"Plymouth Church is the fountain head of the liberty of my race," Dr. Proctor said. "Feb. 6, 1860, Mr. Beecher sold a slave girl into freedom on the spot where I now stand. Feb. 26, 1860, Abraham Lincoln worshipped in this church, occupying pew 89, on my right.

Nov. 4, 1860, Mr. Lincoln was elected President of the United States.

Conferred With Beecher

"Sept. 22, 1862, two and one-half years later, Mr. Lincoln immortalized his name by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, and it has been said that the Great Emancipator spent the night with Mr. Beecher in the parsonage of Plymouth just before he issued that immortal document. Thus, the stream of liberty bursting forth here flowed throughout the Nation.

"Fortunately the colored race is incorrigibly religious, and the church holds a unique place in its life. With other races the home preceded the church, but it is the reverse with the Negro people. Both in Africa and America the church preceded the home in the life of the race. Despite the progress made by the colored race since the emancipation of Lincoln, the church is still its greatest institution, and I believe for years to come it is still to hold the first place in the heart of the race.

"Though he never united with any church, Mr. Lincoln was a man of deep and genuine piety and he gave proof of his patriotic loyalty by making the supreme sacrifice. It would have pained Mr. Lincoln if the race he emancipated had come short in religion or patriotism.

No Negro an Atheist

"I am happy to say that the Negro race has not yet produced an atheist or an anarchist.

"The chief reason for this has been the primacy of the Christian church in the affections of this race. Facing as it does new problems in this modern age, the hope of the Negro lies still in his loyalty to Christ and the church.

"I suppose it is no longer a secret to those gathered here to-night that there are seductive appeals to the colored race to join the ranks of the Reds, and that there are those who would teach us to substitute hate for love. The only bulwark against these allurements is the Negro church.

"The colored population of Brooklyn has swollen to 75,000, and we would lay emphasis on the correlation of spiritual culture, religious education and social service."



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## "'Mancipation Ann'"

Chick Secore March 2-11-25

"WHAT are you doing, Anastasia?" I inquired wonderingly one bright February morning as I met my dusky helper at the head of the cellar stairway, her arms bulging with a promiscuous assortment of papers and bundles and her usually smiling face set in grave, determined lines.

"I'se done been rootin' through my passels, Mis' Elner," she explained as she deposited her treasures on the kitchen table, "fur a little ole flag that my gran'mammy give me, but I ain't spotted it yet."

"What are you hunting a flag for?" I questioned curiously, "This isn't the Fourth of July or Washington's Birthday or—"

Anastasia regarded me with hushed surprise. "No, ma'am, 't ain't neither o' them days," she admitted after a portentous pause, "but it's a mighty 'portant day, howsomever. Mis' Elner, you sholy knows this here's Mr. Lincum's birfday an' no mistake?"

Light dawned on me slowly. "Anastasia, I'd forgotten, there are so many special days—"

"T ain't but onliest one day Mr. Lincum claims as his'n. There's that flag this very minute!" Anastasia cried delightedly, lifting a faded silk flag from its safe shelter in the well-whaleboned depths of an old silk bodice, "Mr. Lincum done give that little ole flag to my gran'mammy wif his own gracious hands."

"Why, Anastasia, it's a great treasure, if you're positive about that."

Anastasia nodded her carefully combed head, emphatically, while her eyes grew bright with memories.

"My ole gran'mammy on my pappy's side didn't come from Virginny, she lived with her white folks down on the eas'n sho' o' Mar'lan', an' far's I ever heerd tell, she war knowed all over ten states an' forty-leven counties as 'Mancipation Ann.'"

I sat down in the kitchen rocker abruptly sensing a story of unusual interest. For awhile Anastasia stood stroking the diminutive flag while the light that shines in the eyes of all born story-tellers lighted up her face; even her soft, usually slow voice took on an unaccustomed note of speedy importance as she launched impressively into her story.

"It war jus' 'bout the tail-end ob de war, Mis' Elner (the war Mr. Lee an' Mr. Grant fought an' Mr. Lincum done put a stop to fin'ly) an' time's war awful heavy ovah the Souf. My ole gran'mammy, who was born an' raised right down on the eas'n sho', got ruminatin' in her min' 'bout all the culled folks what was shippin' up to Balt'mo' an' gettin' big wages jes' cookin' vittles for folks what had money to throw 'way, Yankee folks, Mis' Elner. One mornin' her ole Marster say to her, 'Ann, you don't seem right happy, does you want to go 'way from yo' home?'"

"My gran'mammy war awful young then an' awful full o' nonsense an' seemed like she done fergot 'bout everythin' 'cep' them gole dollahs, an' she say, 'Yes, Mas' Josey, I reckon I hankers to tas' real freedom an' real wages jes' as soon as I kin.'"

"'Bout a week atter that, her Mas' Josey, he call her to him agin an' say as how he had wrote to a Jedge up in Balt'mo' who was goin' to give gran'mammy a job cookin' vittles for big money, seein' as how she war such a notorious cook. Upshot of it war that gran'mammy, all dressed up fine in a new bonnet an' shawl what her mistus give her, was drove to the wharf come Monday night an' put in care o' the capt'n o' the steamer."

"Didn't she care at all about leaving her home and her people, Anastasia?"

Anastasia shook her head. "No, ma'am, she didn't think 'bout home. All gran'mammy thinkin' 'bout war 'tham yaller dollahs up Balt'mo' way."

Anastasia paused, then went on in a low voice as if, even after so long a time had elapsed, she felt a sudden surge of shame for her ungrateful ancestor. "Gran'mammy had a pow'ful hard time learnin' new ways, learnin' how to cook in a big kitchen an' how to hole her sassy tongue when things didn't go jus' to suit her. Weeks pas', an' gran'mammy done droopt like a caller lily what's tiad o' bloomin'. Everything war different. She didn't ever see the Jedge, an' the Mrs. Jedge didn't understan' her, but the gole dollahs come rollin' in every so ofen an' they all set a store by her cookin'."

"'Bout the time her heart was gettin' terrible longin'-like for home, Mrs. Jedge sent fo' her one day an' say as how there was to be a big ball an' a supper befo' han', an' Mr. Lincum an' his wife was to be the honored gwestes. Gran'mammy set her ears back like a racehoss then, an' la, me, but she cooked a supper—!!"

"It war jus' befo' supper time when they strolled in the garden that the Jedge an' Mr. Lincum come by the kitchen do' an' gran'mammy set there wif tears ruinin' down her cheeks beatin' up sass' fo' the puddin'. Gran'mammy couldn't help cryin', 'cause there war a blush-rose bush a-bloomin' in the garden zactly like the one she used to love down home."

"Mr. Lincum stopped an' spoke to her, an' she jumped up straight an' curtzed, but he jes' kep' on axin' her to tell him what war wrong. Gran'mammy say fo' so homely a man he had the mos' beautifulest smile she ever set two eyes on. Fust thing she knowed, gran'mammy blurted it all out 'bout hankerin' so hard fo' her own folks that she didn't care no mo' fo' the gole dollahs. What you think Mr. Lincum done?"

I shook my head slightly, not wishing to interrupt the tender little story.

"He took this here little flag out o' his pocket an' he say, 'Ann, I spects yo' love yo' own folks what reared you an' cared fo' you, an' I knows as how the Jedge here will sen' you home to them. This little flag is one I like to carry, but I'm goin' to giv' it to you to remin' you that freedom don't mean shirkin' yo' job or bein' ungrateful. I reckon you'll recall that every time you looks at it.'"



"Did she go home, Anastasia? Do tell me that."

"She'd a flew home, Mis' Elner, if she'd only knowed how. As it was the cap'n mos' los' his chart tryin' to keep her quiet while that little ole boat steamed down the bay. It war crossin' the Ches'peake Bay that gran'mammy hushed up a riot. Seems like yes'day I set down by our ole h'arth an' listened to her tellin' 'bout it for the seben-hund'eth time. I kin hear the win' now blowin' through our gum trees, an' the sleet beatin' a tune on our winderpanes, an' gran'mammy sittin' thar picturin' it all fo' me—"

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"But the riot, Anastasia," I interrupted, "do tell about the riot."

"Well," Anastasia began, looking past me (and through me as well, I often felt) with her familiar "back-to-Virginia" stare, "as I was sayin', gran'mammy war settin' in the lower cabin, all huddled up in a split-bottomed chair, when a culled boy run up from the engine room, jus' as he was, without no coat nor nothin', an' shoutin' all the time 'bout how culled folks was 'mancipated an' didn't have to work for no ole marsters; how he claimed his freedom an' coaxed all the culled folks on bo'd ship to jine him in enjoyin' it."

"Fust thing you knows he had a crowd 'roun' him so black you couldn't see his yaller face, an' he war a rantin' an' ravin' 'bout bein' a free cit'zen, thanks to 'good ole Abe.' It would a been safe fo' him, I reckon, if he hadn't said that, even though he kep' blamin' Mr. Lincum for sayin' things he never said. That boy war goin' full tilt when a little bit o' cyclone in shape o' my gran'mammy jumped up on a red plush sofy an' started wavin' this here little flag an' tellin' those culled folks what war den flabbergasted 'bout Mr. Lincum givin' it to her 'long with his good advice."

"That there light boy hadn't no chance after that. Gran'mammy, she tole 'em all: 'bout how she set out fer gole dollahs, an' how she et her h'art out hankerin' fo' home. La, gran'mammy talked the wool right offen their eyes an' woun' up the rav'lins, an' that bright boy sneaked back to the engine room plum shut up fo' a time. Gran'mammy, she strut 'bout that lower cabin lis'ing to folks braggin' 'bout how she war the woman what talked to Mr. Lincum, an' all the time that old boat war pushin' right on home. That's how come they started callin' gran'mammy 'Mancipation Ann,' Mis' Elner, cause she never did leave off talkin' 'bout Mr. Lincum."

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"How did you get the flag, Anastasia?"

A broad smile broke over Anastasia's face: "Reckon 'cause I war the onliest one what never tiad o' listenin' 'bout it all. Gran'mammy could brag to me 'til she got her fill o' braggin', an' I war fresh to start out the nex' mornin'. Guess she knew I'd take care of the flag same as she did, Mis' Elner. I keeps it right in her bes' silk basque with the rose o' sharons done in steel beads down the fronts. It belonged to her lady 'fore gran'mammy saw it on herself; but I ain't finished my story."

"Early in the mornin' when the boat docked gran'mammy war the fust one off. La, how good the little town looked to her! She say it war paradise compaed to Balt'mo'. Every white house seemed to smile at her as she hurried up the street. Gran'mammy say she war so happy she could hardly keep her har't from bustin' into song. After bit, she see her own home. Gran'mammy say no streets o' gole ever could look half so elegant as them oystershell paths in her ole marster's

"Mancipation Ann" - 2

garden.

"Fust she thought nobody war up, but soon she heard her Mas' Josey's steps an' she couldn't go no further fo' plain joy. Gran'mammy set there on the po'ch step an' Mas' Josey, he opened up all the shutters an' sta'ted down to the garden an' he spied gran'mammy settin' there. 'Ann, he say, 'you Ann, what you doin' here? You ain't done nuthin' you oughten' to up in Balt'mo'?' Gran'mammy say she couldn't bear no mo', so she jus' laid her haid down on Mas' Josey's big shiny boots an' begged him to take her back."

"I should think he would have been glad enough to have her," I declared indignantly.

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Anastasia shook her head. "He felt like she hadn't treated the Jedge jus' right, Mis' Elner. Upshot of it all were, he tole gran'mammy she'd have to see how her mistus felt about it, an' gran'mammy went up the stairs to where her Mis' Lizy Anne war a-lyin' in her big fo' poster bed thinkin' 'bout stirrin' fo' the day. Gran'mammy jes' pushed the do' awfu' meek-like, but her lady spied her. Mis' Elner, she jus' hole out her two arms to gran'mammy, an' gran'mammy she jus' run right into 'em!"

"After a 'long while gran'mammy riz up an' dove down in her skirt pocket an' brought out twenty-eight dollahs, all in shinin' gole, an' rolled 'em out on the log-cabin quilt. Gran'mammy say it war a pow'fu' han'some quilt. 'That's fo' anything you say, Mis' Lizy Anne,' she declar', 'but don' let me never set eyes on it—never. Why, honey,' gran'mammy say, 'with all that style, they didn't even own a spidah in that Balt'mo' kitchen!'"

"A spider, Anastasia?"

"You'all calls 'em fryin' pans an' skillets, Mis' Elner," Anastasia explained, "but that's 'cause you don' know no better, but down on the eas'n sho', an' down in Virginy, quality calls 'em spidahs, like they is."

"What are you going to do with the flag?" I questioned.

"I se goin' to put it right here where I can see it all day long an' ruminat 'bout Mr. Lincum. Pity I can't spen' one day in the whole year thinkin' 'bout him when he war so kin' to my gran'mammy. Every time I looks at it, I says, 'Little ole flag, you-all spells freedom fo' black folks, but you don't spell ungrateful h'arts. I sure am obliged to Mr. Lincum fo' learnin' my gran'mammy that—so's she could turn 'roun' an' learn it to me!'" E. G. R. Y.

### AN ANECDOTE OF LINCOLN

In each issue of the Week By Week from boyhood to his death. Save each copy. You will have anecdotes and illustrations that when put together will give you a very wonderful story of the life of the immortal savior of our country.

#### "MASSA LINKUM" WORSHIPED BY THE NEGROES

In 1863, Colonel McKaye, of New York, with Robert Dale Owen and one or two other gentlemen, were associated as a committee to investigate the condition of the freedmen on the coast of North Carolina. Upon their return from Hilton Head they reported to the President, and in the course of the interview, Colonel McKaye related the following incident:

He had been speaking of the ideas of power entertained by these people. He said they had an idea of God, as the Almighty, and they had realized in their former position the power of their masters. Up to the time of the arrival among them of the Union forces, they had no knowledge of any other power. Their masters fled upon the approach of our soldiers, and this gave the slaves a conception of a power greater than that exercised by them. This power they called "Massa Linkum."

Colonel McKaye said their place of worship was a large building which they called "the praise house;" and the leader of the meeting, a venerable black man, was known as "praise man." On a certain day, when there was quite a large gathering of the people, considerable confusion was created by different parsons attempting to tell who and what "Massa Linkum" was. In the midst of the excitement, the white-bearded leader commanded silence.

"Brederin," said he, "you don't know nosen' what you'se talkin' about. Now, you just listen to me. Massa Linkum, he everywhar. He know ebertying." Then, solemnly looking up, he added, "He walk de earf like the Lord!"

Colonel McKaye said that Mr. Lincoln seemed much affected by this account. He did not smile, as another man might have done, but got up from his chair and walked in silence two or three times across the floor. As he resumed his seat, he said, very impressively, "It is a momentous thing to be the instrument, under Providence, of the liberation of a race."

#### THE COLORED PEOPLE OF RICHMOND HONOR LINCOLN

G. F. Shepley gives the following interesting reminiscence:

"After Mr. Lincoln's interview with Judge Campbell, the President being about to return to the Wabash, I took him and Admiral Porter in my carriage. An immense concourse of colored people thronged the streets, accompanied and followed the carriage, calling upon the President with the wildest exclamations of gratitude and delight.

"He was the Moses, the Messiah, to the slaves of the South. Hundreds of colored women tossed their hands high in the air and then bent down to the ground, weeping for joy. Some shouted songs of deliverance and sang the old plantation refrains, which prophesied the coming of a deliverer from bondage. 'God bless you, Father Abraham!' went up from a thousand throats.

"Those only who have seen the paroxysmal enthusiasm of a religious meeting of slaves can form an adequate conception of the way in which tears and smiles, and shouts of the emancipated people evinced the frenzy of their gratitude to their deliverer. He looked at all attentively, with a face expressive only of a sort of pathetic wonder.

"Occasionally its sadness would alternate with one of his peculiar smiles, and he would remark on the great proportion of those whose color indicated a mixed lineage from the white master and the black slave; and that reminded him of some little story of his life in Kentucky, which he would smilingly tell; and then his face would relapse again into that sad expression which all will remember who saw him during the last few weeks of the rebellion. Perhaps it was a presentiment of his impending fate.

"I accompanied him to the ship, bade him farewell and left him, to see his face no more. Not long after, the bullet of the assassin arrested the beatings of one of the kindest hearts that ever throbbed in human bosom.



Indianapolis Journal 2-12-36

## 'Lincoln' a Great Name to Former Slaves Here

IT'S Lincoln's birthday. To most, it is a day with a certain historical significance, bringing to memory the figure of a great man. But, out at the county infirmary there are two men and a woman for whom the day has a sharply personal meaning. In their youth, they were among the slaves that Lincoln freed.

Horace Chew, who despite his 89 years is a fine figure of a man, has heard the bloodhounds baying on dark southern nights, seen his neighbors sold at auction, watched men writhe as the lustily swung cat o' nine tails gouged red furrows across their bare backs.

"When Mr. Lincoln freed the slaves," Chew said Tuesday, "the people were as happy as new born babies. There was big celebratin' then, big doin's, and the people was that happy they cried."

### Year and a Century Old

In the men's hospital ward, Allan Bland, born a slave a year and a century ago, looks out over the white Wauwatosa landscape and remembers cotton fields, rich southern loam and the song and jigging on spring evenings in the slave quarters. Bland says his master was good to his slaves, but some of the neighbors treated their people "like hawks and hound dawgs."

At the other end of the building Blands' wife, Calline, 86, sits with her memories in a wheel chair, and is a little suspicious of strangers who ask questions. More than once a new doctor has felt the bite of her cane when he became what Calline thought was unnecessarily inquisitive.

"I was only a little girl in the slave days," she said. "But I remember how the people used to pray for freedom. They would get together in a dark room, turn a wash kettle upside down and sit around it praying and singing hymns. The kettle was to catch the sound so white-folks couldn't hear it."

### Recalls Sale of Slaves

Chew lived his youth on a large farm near Louisville, Ky. He slept on a pallet in the same room with his master, but his father and mother and their six other children lived in a cabin of their own. "Five miles away," he said, "there was a white man and all he did was buy and sell colored folks. I've seen it many times. Up on a bluff where everybody could see, they put the men and women on a block and sold them to the highest bidder. Then they herded them all on a river boat just like horses or cattle and down south they'd go to work in the cotton fields. Sometimes their brothers and sisters would run out and try to kiss them when the boat was leaving. Now that wasn't right, was it, selling people like that? When you haven't seen it for yourself, sometimes you can't believe things



(Journal Staff Photo)

### Horace Chew

like that happen; but I know, because I was there."

One dark night Horace's mother whispered to the children that they must get dressed up in their best things. Their father, who had run away the year before, was coming to take his family with him to the north and freedom. "I remember that night so clear," Chew said. "We were all so quiet and excited. My father came in an old express wagon he'd hired in Louisville. We went soft and easy out of the house. Nothing happened and we got to the river and went across in a skiff."

### Remember Nature's Beauty

These three former slaves have no bitterness toward the south. In fact, all three seem to long to be back. When they talk of the south, they look out the window and talk of sycamores and magnolia trees and swamp crickets and the wide look of cotton fields. During the long years they've lived in the north, they've forgotten whatever was bitter and unbearable and now remember most the natural beauties of their south.

Chew said, "Some of the people down there, and up here, too, are no good, but the country, the country's got nothing wrong with it. It's a good country, north or south." And Bland said, "I'm only 101 years old. In the spring I'm going back to farming. I like horses and cows and hogs and chickens, and I like corn and hemp and taters; fact is I like everything that grows in the ground or walks on it."

In celebration of Lincoln's birthday, Chew plans to attend the race relations day meeting to be held Sunday at the First Methodist church under sponsorship of various church and club groups of the city. The day is observed nationally on a Sunday near Lincoln's birthday.



"They were freed from  
slavery" - 1

PHILADELPHIA  
**DAILY NEWS**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1938

**THEY WERE FREED FROM SLAVERY BY LINCOLN**



Days of slavery are still remembered by these three, Mrs. Phyllis Pollitt, who came north same year Lincoln was shot; Jenny Jacobs, 94, and Elbert Williams, 90, who was born in Washington, Ga. Williams fought in Civil war.



# 3 Former Slaves Pay Homage To Memory of Emancipator

(See Lincoln Photos on Pages 10 and 11)

As they sit in the dim light of the fast-fading years, three residents of the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Persons, 4400 Girard ave., today pay deeper reverence to Lincoln's birthday than all the other Philadelphians who honor the martyred President.

To them the Great Emancipator is more than a phrase. Their's is a personal love. For they were slaves and Lincoln struck off the shackles.

There may be more former slaves in this city but here under one roof are two women and one man—living links to the system of human bondage—who vividly recall the stirring events of the Civil War and who wept with joy when Abraham Lincoln lifted them out of slavery.

## Fought for Union

One of them, Elbert Y. Williams, more than 90 years old, joined the Union army as a lad when Sherman's soldiers swept through Georgia. He was born a slave in Washington Ga. and came north following the war.

Mrs. Phyllis Pollitt, 85 years old was born near Salisbury, Md. "We did not have it as hard in Maryland as the slaves in some far south states", she said, "but we were owned and had to obey. There was great rejoicing when we were freed by Father Abraham."

## Served General Grant

Phyllis worked in a hotel in Baltimore and just following the Civil War she served meals to General Grant, General Robert E. Lee and General George B. McClellan.

Jenny Jacobs is 94 years old and also was born on the Eastern Shore. She came to Philadelphia the same year that Lincoln was shot.

All these former slaves are in good health; all of them spend their time doing small chores and in reading. To them Abraham Lincoln lives and always will be an inspiration to mankind.

## League Honors Abe

In a colorful and patriotic ceremony, the Union League tonight will honor its four surviving members of the G. A. R.

The historic club, which was founded in the darkest days of the Civil War, expects to play host to one of the largest gatherings ever to enter the Broad st. clubhouse. In the presence of three of the four

honored members and the First City Troop, a reception will be held, to be followed by a dinner and an assembly, the latter in brilliantly-decorated Lincoln Hall.

The Rev. Joseph Fort Newton, biographer and authority on the life of the Civil War president, will make the principal address at the evening meeting.

## Veteran Members Present

The veteran members of the

league are Henry Clay Butcher, oldest member of the organization; Charles D. Barney, Robert Carson and Frederick J. McWade. The latter three will be present.

Butcher is the only living member of the club who joined the organization before the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

A host of civic leaders will be among the 1500 who are expected to attend.

# Negro Philanthropy Is Tribute to Lincoln

## Philly Housing Project, Built With Prize, Dedicated.

Philadelphia, Feb. 12 (AP)—A once poverty-stricken Negro couple selected this 131st anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth to dedicate a low-cost housing project they are building for poor out of a \$150,000 prize.

Benjamin and Pearl Mason, who a year ago were living with two children in a tumble-down shack on \$11.40 weekly relief, are pouring most of their wealth into a modern apartment building for the betterment of less fortunate members of their race.

It was only natural, the Masons said, that the ground breaking ceremony should be arranged as a tribute to the Great Emancipator.

The building, with apartments for about 100 families and every modern convenience, will rise in the South Philadelphia slum district where the Masons lived during the dark days when they did not always have enough to eat.

After fortune smiled on them they bought an inexpensive home in a more pretentious section and a car. First, however, they paid

back all the \$2,133.90 they had received in relief.

All the rest of their prize, except \$57,000 earmarked for income tax is being invested in the housing project. They spent \$40,000 to buy a block of dilapidated tenements which will be razed for the new building.

To promote their plan to aid Negroes, 75 per cent of the construction work will be done by members of their race.

The development will be known as the "Frances Plaza Apartments" for the Masons' daughter, Frances, 10.



Prior to the recent general election I overheard a Negro resident of Versailles declare his intention to vote a straight Republican ticket because "Abe Lincoln, a Republican, set my ancestors free."

This, of course, was no innovation in connection with Negro voting. For over three-quarters of a century Negro voters in our country have been supporting Republican candidates for public office for no other reason than the belief that Lincoln freed the slaves. White Republicans in every election campaign since Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, have made political capital of that act. They have impressed upon the colored folk the belief that their race should be eternally devoted to Lincoln and the Republican party for abolishing slavery in

this country.

'Tis true that slavery was abolished in the United States (in part, as I shall show later) by President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. But there is another side to the question—a side, I presume, very few Negro voters of this or any preceding generation have ever considered. Naturally no white Republican, intent upon keeping the bulk of the Negro voters in his party's fold, has ever gone out of his way to bring forward all the facts related to President Lincoln's emancipation of the slaves.

Practically the only thing the Negro race ever received at the

hands of the Republicans was freedom from involuntary servitude and the right to vote. And freedom of the race from slavery was a secondary factor in the course of events which produced it.

The War Between the States was not fought by the Northern States to free the slaves but to maintain the Union. The best proof of this is the disavowal by President Lincoln of proclamations by General Fremont and General Hunter, abolishing slavery in Missouri and South Carolina, respectively. Such steps as freeing the escaped slaves of Southern owners were taken as war measures merely.

On September 22, 1862, Lincoln

issued a proclamation giving notice to the inhabitants of the Southern States that, unless they returned to the Union by January 1, 1863, he would declare their slaves forever free. The Southern States failing to return to their allegiance, Lincoln, on the prescribed date issued his Emancipation Proclamation. This proclamation declared free the slaves held in all the Southern States, except in certain districts of Louisiana and Virginia then occupied by Federal troops. The proclamation declared that it was issued as an act of "military necessity" by President Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy.

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## As I See It

By ORVAL W. BAYLOR



NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1949

## Young Patrons of Harlem Library Hear About Nation's Civil War President



Mrs. Glyndon Flynt Greer, children's librarian at the Harlem Branch Library at 9 West 124th Street, reading about Abraham Lincoln during the reading hour yesterday

Nat Fein



# THE UNTOLD STORY

*By Roscoe Simmons*

Hundreds of biographies of Lincoln, many of them based on gossip or merely tales to delight the fancy, have been written. They will never end so long as the greatest story of freedom is told.

While statesmen and editors argue over Lincoln, his birthday is a good time to recall that, altho many free men of color were impatient and talkative, the slaves kept company with him in the night. To them he had organized freedom, provided its constitution and invented its language. At his death, his work for them done, lamentations no language can describe were heard everywhere.

## Story of One Woman

In Charleston, S. C., stronghold of secession, an old woman now free, ran screaming through the streets, crying, "Massa Sam's dead; Massa Sam, O Lord." She was asked about "Massa Sam."

She replied, "Uncle Sam. He's gone." Pressed further, she said, "Mister Lincum—he's our Uncle Sam; en now dey done kilt him!" In the last decade or two, in justification of their desertion of the Republican party and joining the party that gave both Lincoln and the slave so much trouble, book-readers among colored people started throwing mud at Lincoln.

They have begun to desist, not because of conscience but because even white Democrats told them, "You are making fools of yourselves."

What Lincoln did for the slave, often runs the claim, he did only

to preserve the Union. From his youth up, others say, the cause of the slave was the one cause of Lincoln's life. Nothing else ever excited him into action, they maintain, all his great thoughts and language are found in that cause and nowhere else.

A seldom quoted letter by Lincoln discloses his life long interest in the American colored people. It was addressed to Gen. Wadsworth.

## Passage Is Quoted

Lincoln wrote: "How to better the condition of the colored race has long been a study which has attracted my serious and careful attention. I am clear and decided as to what course I shall pursue in the premises, regarding it as a religious duty, as the nation's guardian of these people, who have so heroically vindicated their manhood on the battlefield, where, in assisting to save the life of the Republic, they have demonstrated their right to the ballot, which is but the human protection of the flag they have so fearlessly defended."

Then there is his letter to Gov. Michael Hahn of Louisiana, suggesting that colored men be granted the franchise, for, in his words, "They would probably help in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty in the family of freedom."

What is perhaps Lincoln's greatest letter, next to the Bixby note, was addressed to J. C. Conkling of Springfield, Ill.



*Akron Beacon Journal 2/12/50*  
**Negroes Still Not Free, Mr. Lincoln**

EDITOR BEACON JOURNAL:

In the year 1620, about the same time the Pilgrims came to America, the Dutch brought a shipload of Negroes to the English Colony at Jamestown. In the years that followed, more Negroes were "brought" to America, until by the year 1800, the Negro population of America was about a million souls.

Most Negroes in this country are the direct descendants of a race and a people who were pioneers long before the American revolution. These colored pioneers shed their tears and their blood which were mingled with the good earth of early America. They fought and worked together with the white pioneers to make this a free nation. Why then are we, their descendants, treated as strangers in our own country?

TODAY we have the privilege of sending our sons and daughters to school and college to obtain a good education, but after they graduate the doors of most offices and business places are shut to them. We are urged by the politicians to get out and vote for better working and living

conditions, but the men we help to elect refuse to abide by the promises they make to us.

When in desperation we turn to radical political movements to further our cause, the Republicans and Democrats malign us and call us traitors and Communists. Even the DP's brought in since the war from Europe are treated better than we are. They get work and clean and decent places to live in, while we must be satisfied with the slums.

I WONDER what Abraham Lincoln would say on this anniversary of his birth if he were here to see the plight of a people he gave his life to set free. A race of people who after almost one hundred years of "freedom" are still the victims of exploitation and broken promises.

How much longer must we wait for full equality and freedom that we deserve as American citizens? When will the good and tolerant white folks, who with our race, form a majority, make the minority of selfish bigots accede to our demands for legislation that will guarantee to us our God-given rights?

CURRY AUSTIN.





*"The road... is too little travelled"*

—DR. RALPH J. BUNCHE



## Commemorating the 142nd anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth president of the United States of America and first citizen of Springfield



Lt. Gov. Sherwood Dixon of Illinois, Dr. Bunche, and Judge DeWitt S. Crow, Club President, at Executive Mansion prior to Address.

### *About the speaker...*

Bunche, Ralph Johnson— U. S. political scientist and government official, was born on August 7, 1904, in Detroit, Michigan. He was graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, California, in 1927, received a master's degree in government at Harvard University in 1928 and a Ph.D. in 1934. He taught political science at Howard University, Washington, D. C., becoming a full professor in 1938. Meantime, he travelled through French West Africa on a Rosenwald field fellowship studying and comparing the administration of French Togoland, a mandated area, and Dahomey, a colony. He was later awarded a postdoctoral fellowship from the Social Science Research Council and studied at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, and the London School of Economics in 1936 and 1937 before returning to Africa for further studies of colonial policy. During World War II, he served variously with the joint chiefs of staff, the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.) and the U. S. State Department, principally as technical advisor on the African area. He joined the United Nations secretariat as director of the division of trusteeship in 1946. He was assisting Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden in mediating the Jewish-Arab warfare in Palestine when Bernadotte was assassinated, and he became acting mediator and supervised the truce and armistice agreements there. In May, 1949, he rejected an offer for an appointment as U. S. assistant secretary of state. Awarded the 1950 Nobel Peace prize, he also recently became the first Negro professor at Harvard. It is his main task to speed development of retarded peoples of the Earth. Some 60 territories held in trust by the U. S., the British Commonwealth, Belgium and France are under his surveillance.

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PATRONS WHO HELPED FINANCE THIS LEAFLET . . . George W. Bunn, Jr., Judge Roger E. Chapin, Michael Eckstein, Arthur H. Gottschalk, Alton G. Hall, George C. Hoffmann, Milford Hunsley, John H. Hunter, Mrs. Robert E. Hurie, C. Malden Jones, Rev. G. B. Winston.

# Address delivered by Dr. Ralph Bunche at Lincoln Birthday Observation of the Mid-Day Luncheon Club at Springfield, Illinois, February 12, 1951

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I am delighted at this first opportunity to visit Springfield. It is particularly gratifying to be here—in a community in which he lived and worked—at this observation of the birthday of a man of rare greatness—the most stalwart figure of our nation's history.

It is not within my feeble capacity, or indeed, within the puny power of words, to do fair honour to Abraham Lincoln. It is not, perhaps, within the power of any of us among the living to do so, except as we may individually dedicate ourselves to the fulfilment of the imperative human objectives which he sought.

Lincoln was a man of great good will. The debt owed to him by our nation is incalculable. The legacy of human values which he bequeathed to us is priceless. Yet, like all of us, Lincoln was mortal, and being mortal, was fallible.

The problems which confronted him challenged to the utmost human wisdom and patience. The decisions he was called upon to make were momentous. A nation was at stake. It is no discredit to him that history records his moments of indecision, his groping, even his bows to political expediency. But in the crucial hours of decision, he found a boundless strength which flowed from his unwavering faith in the "plain people," from the equalitarianism of this great West in which he was reared, from his undecorated belief in the equality and dignity of man.

I have chosen to devote some attention today to the problem of human relations in the precarious world in which we live out our anxious existence. For this would seem to be peculiarly appropriate on this auspicious occasion.

Lincoln, himself, was called upon to save this nation from as great a crisis and conflict in human relations as has ever confronted any nation. And though he met the challenge and saved the nation, even Lincoln could not avert a cruel, tragic, devastating internecine war. Indeed, eighty-six years later, that war is still not fully liquidated, and at times it may seem not entirely clear who actually won it.

Moreover, it must be clear that the greatest danger to mankind today is still to be found in the deplorable human relations which everywhere prevail.

Were Lincoln alive today, I imagine that he could scarcely avoid taking a dark view of the relations among peoples the world over, not, by any means, excluding his own country. It would be understandable if even a quick survey of the current state of world and domestic affairs should induce in him one of those occasional moods of melancholia which some historians have attributed to him.

For what is the situation? The relations among peoples are broadly characterized by dangerous animosities, hatreds, mutual re-creminations, suspicions, bigotries and intolerances. Man has made spectacular progress in science, in transportation and communication, in the arts, in all things material. Yet, it is a matter of colossal and tragic irony that man, in all his genius, having learned to harness nature, to control the relations among the elements and to mould them to his will—even to the point where he now has the means readily at hand for his own virtual self-destruction—has never yet learned how to *live* with himself; he has not mastered



the art of human relations. In the realm of human understanding the peoples of the world remain shockingly illiterate. This has always been and today remains man's greatest challenge: how to teach the peoples of the world the elemental lesson of the essential kinship of mankind and man's identity of interest.

We live in a most dangerous age—an age of supersonic airspeeds, of biological warfare, of atomic and hydrogen bombs, and who knows what next. In no exaggerated sense, we all today exist on borrowed time. If we of this generation deserve no better fate, surely our children do. They, certainly, can never understand why we could not do at least as well as the animal kingdom.

We need peace desperately. But the world has always needed peace. Today, however, the question is not the simple one of peace or war, as it has been in the past. The question now is sheer survival—survival of civilization, survival of mankind. And the time is short, frighteningly short.

How is the question to be answered? We may improvise, we may build diplomatic dams, we may pile international pact upon international pact. We may arm to the teeth and to the last ounce of our physical resources. But all this will never be enough so long as deep fears, suspicions, prejudices, and hatreds characterize the relations among the peoples of a now small world.

It is mankind, it is ourselves that we must fear more than the atomic or hydrogen bomb. It is in man's perversities, in his brooding suspicions, in his arrogances and intolerances, in his false self-righteousness and in his apathy that the real danger is to be found. In the final analysis, there is but one road to peace and that is the road of human understanding and fellow-feeling, of inflexible determination to achieve peaceful relations among men. That, clearly, is a long, hard road, and today it is too little travelled.

If the relations among men were everywhere, or let us even say *most* everywhere, internationally and domestically, good, there would be little to fear. For then the free peoples of the world would have unassailable strength, and more than that, unwavering confidence in their ability to protect themselves collectively and fully against any maverick

who might go on the loose. On the other side of the coin, bad human relations are, indeed, an encouragement and stimulus to the adventures of mavericks. It is on the disunity of peoples that dictators prey.

I am optimistic enough about my fellow beings to believe that it is human *attitudes*, not human nature, that must be feared—and changed. On the international scene, it is these attitudes which have brought the world to the menacing state of affairs of today—the ominous “localized” wars, the “cold war,” the maneuverings for power and dominance, the dangerous rivalries, the propaganda battles—cannibalistic struggles in which ethical principles, and moral law are often callously jettisoned. If peoples could not be induced to suspect, to fear, and finally to hate one another, there could be no wars, for governments, from whatever motivations, can only lead peoples into wars—the peoples must fight them. And in these wars, countless numbers of human beings—by nature essentially good, whatever their immediate attitudes—must be sacrificed solely because the peoples of one society or another embark, or permit themselves to be embarked, upon fatal adventures of conquest or domination. On the domestic scene, it is human attitudes, not human nature, which nurture the racial and religious hatreds and bigotries which today permeate many societies, and even in democracies thrive in the fertile soil of complacency.

The picture is foreboding and the immediate future looms ominously. But perhaps there lies the hope. Can man, a thinking animal, capable of both emotion and cool calculation with regard to his self-interest, be brought to his senses in time? Can he see the black doom which awaits him at the end of the path he now follows? I have enough faith in the potentiality of mankind for good to believe that he can save himself. May it be fervently hoped that he will muster the determined will to do so.

Certainly, there is nothing in human nature which renders it impossible for men to live peacefully and harmoniously with one another. Hatred, intolerance, bigotry, chauvinism are never innate—they are the bad lessons taught in society. Despite the fact that in recorded history, mankind has been as much at war as at peace, it cannot be

concluded that war is inevitable—a natural state of mankind. Nor do I believe that because hatreds, bigotries, intolerances and prejudices loom large in the pages of history, these are the natural conditions of man's societal existence on earth.

I think it no exaggeration to say that unfortunately, throughout the ages, organized religion and education have failed miserably in their efforts to save man from himself. Perhaps they have failed because so often they have merely reflected the mean and narrow attitudes of the very peoples they were striving to save.

Human understanding, human brotherhood and solidarity, will be achieved, if at all, only when the peoples of many lands find a common bond through a compelling sense of urgency in achieving common goals. The purposes and principles of the United Nations—with peace and justice and equality as the universal common denominators—afford that bond and the common goals. The implements of modern warfare afford the urgency, if people once understand the frightful implications and elect to survive.

Lincoln, instinctively a true democrat, believed deeply in the essential justice of the plain people, whose better impulses and good will he trusted ultimately to prevail. Given half a chance, I believe that the free peoples of the world today, in their collectivity, will justify Lincoln's faith.

It is not necessary to seek to transform people into saints in order that impending disaster may be averted.

Throughout the world today, thinking and psychology have not kept pace with the times. That people inevitably think in terms of their self-interest is something very little can be done about. But is it not equally tenable that a great deal can be done about influencing people to think and act in terms of their *true* self-interest? In this dangerous international age, notions of exalted and exaggerated nationalism, national egocentrism and isolationism, of chauvinism, of group superiority and master race, of group exclusiveness, of national self-righteousness, of special privilege, are in the interest of neither the world nor of any particular group in it. They are false views of self-interest and carry us all toward the disaster of war. And in the war of to-

morrow there can be no true victor; at best there will be only survivors. Our old concepts and values are no longer valid or realistic. The future may well belong to those who first realign their international sights.

I sincerely believe that the generality of peoples throughout the world really long for peace and freedom. There can be no doubt that this is true of the generality of the American people, despite some impatient and ultra-jingoistic hot-heads in our midst. If this is true, it is the one great hope for the future. The problem is how to crystallize this longing, how to fashion it into an overpowering instrument for good. The United Nations recognizes acutely the desperate need, but has not yet found the ways and means of mobilizing the peace-loving attitudes of the peoples of the world over the stubborn walls of national egoisms.

Every peace and freedom loving nation, every government, every individual, has a most solemn obligation to mankind and the future of mankind in the fateful effort to rescue the world from the morass in which it is now entrapped and to underwrite a future of peace and freedom for all. This is a time of gravest crisis. Constructive, concerted actions and policies—not negativism and recrimination—are called for. There are many motives in many eyes. There is in the world no nation which can stand before the ultimate bar of human history and say: "We have done our utmost to induce peoples to live in peace with one another as brothers."

It must be very clear that what the world needs most desperately today is a crusade for peace and understanding of unparalleled dimension; a universal mobilization of the strong but diffused forces of peace and justice. The collective voice of the free peoples of the world, could be so irresistible as to dwarf into insignificance both A and H bombs and to disperse and discourage the war-like and war-minded.

In the existing state of affairs, societies admittedly owe it to themselves to be prepared and protected against any eventuality; they must build up their national defenses. They must do so, incidentally, only because they have not, for reasons of national sovereignty, been willing to give the United Nations the decisive power and means to



cope with a powerful act of military aggression. With vigorous measures to ensure national defense, given the present international circumstances, reason and reality could perceive no quarrel. But it would also appear that reason and reality would dictate that since armament can never be an end in itself and must expand itself, if at all, only in war, the only way peace-loving societies might cover their ever-mounting losses from the tremendous expenditures on armaments would be to exert an effort of at least equal magnitude for peace—to the end that the armaments would never have to be used. This, it seems to me, would be at once good economics, good humanitarianism, and good self-interest.

In the final analysis it is peoples who must be won and who alone can win the world-wide struggle for freedom and justice. People can be rallied to ideas. They must be given more than guns and an enemy to shoot at.

And now, if I may take advantage of my nationality and speak for a moment simply as an American citizen rather than an international official, I may ask where do we, as Americans, stand with regard to the challenge of human relations? It is a question, surely, in which Abraham Lincoln would be deeply interested were he with us today.

The United States is in the forefront of international affairs today. The eyes of the world are focussed upon us as never before in our history. A great part of the world looks to us for a convincing demonstration of the validity and the virility of the democratic way of life as America exalts it. It would be catastrophic if we should fail to give that demonstration. We cannot afford to fail.

But it is only too apparent that our democratic house is not yet in ship-shape order. There are yawning crevices in our human relations; the gap between our democratic profession on the one hand, and our daily practices of racial and religious intolerance on the other, while less wide than formerly, is still very wide.

Race relations is our number one social problem, perhaps our number one problem. It is no mere sectional problem; it is a national—indeed an international—problem. For any problem today which challenges the ability of democracy to function convincingly, which

undermines the very foundations of democracy and the faith of people in it, is of concern to the entire peace and freedom-loving world. Surely, it must be abundantly clear that it is only through the triumph of democracy and the determined support of peoples for it as an imperative way of life that secure foundations for world peace can be laid.

That race relations are gradually improving both in the South and elsewhere in the nation, cannot be doubted. But neither can it be doubted that these relations remain in a dangerous state, that they are a heavy liability to the nation, and constitute a grave weakness in our national democratic armour.

Certainly the costs of anti-racial and anti-religious practices are enormously high. Attitudes of bigotry, when widely prevalent in a society, involve staggering costs in terms of prestige and confidence throughout the rest of the world, not to mention the contamination and degradation resulting from the presence of such psychological disease in the body of the society.

Throughout the nation, in varying degree, the Negro minority—almost a tenth of the population—suffers severe political, economic and social disabilities solely because of race. In Washington, the capital of the greatest democracy in human history, Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, sits majestically in his massive armchair behind the marble pillars, and overlooks a city which stubbornly refuses to admit his moral dictum that the Negro is a man; a city in which no Negro can live and work with dignity; a city which, administered by Congress itself, subjects one-fourth of its citizens to segregation, discrimination and daily humiliation. Washington is our nation's greatest shame precisely because it is governed by Congress and is our capital. Of all American cities, it should symbolize and vitalize our democracy.

In his time, Lincoln saw that slavery had to be abolished not only because as an institution it was contrary to human morality, but also because it was inimical to the interests of the "plain people" of America. By the same token, present-day practices of racial segregation and discrimination should be outlawed as inimical to the interests of all who believe in and derive benefit from democracy, whatever their race or religion.

The vitality of this great country derives from the unity of purpose and the devotion to its democratic ideals of the diversified peoples—by race, religion and national origin—who make up its population. Disunity and group conflict constantly sap that vitality.

As a nation we have also found great strength in the fact that we have always been able and willing to face our shortcomings frankly and attack them realistically. It is in this spirit and in this knowledge that I, as an American, take occasion to point to our shortcomings. I do not imply, in any sense, that the rest of the world is free of such imperfections, or in given instances, far greater ones.

To enjoy our maximum strength, we need more *applied* democracy. We need to live up to the principles which we believe in and for which we are hailed by the world. We too need a mobilization—a mobilization throughout the country of men and women of good will, of men and women who are determined to see American democracy fulfill its richest promise, and who will ceaselessly exert their efforts toward that end.

Our nation, by its traditional philosophy, by its religious precepts, by its Constitution, stands for freedom and equality, for the brotherhood of man, and for full respect for the rights and dignity of the individual. By giving unqualified expression to these ideals in our daily life we can and will achieve a democratic society here so strong in the hearts and minds of its citizens, so sacred to the individual, that it will be forever invulnerable to any kind of attack.

We cannot eradicate prejudices and bigotries overnight, of course. I seek no miracles. But neither is there anything sacrosanct about the present rate of advance. The pace of progress can be greatly accelerated if a great many of our organizations and institutions—schools, churches, labour unions, industries and civic organizations—would put a stronger shoulder to the wheel.

I am certain that the majority and more of the American people believe firmly in our democratic way of life and are willing that all our citizens, of whatever color or creed, enjoy it. But on the Negro problem our thinking has become obfuscated by illusions, myths and shibboleths, and we have been, by and large, complacent about it.

Many of us seek to divorce ourselves from responsibility for this embarrassing contradiction in our democracy by personally deploring race prejudice and practices of discrimination and segregation, and dismissing them as not being representative of the country.

But this is false. So long as such practices widely persist in the society, so long as they are tolerated anywhere in the land, they represent America; they represent you and me. They are part and parcel of the American way. They affect the life and the future of every American, irrespective of colour. They betray the faith of the noble man we here honour today.

This may be said of attitudes and practices directed against all American minorities—Negroes, Indians, Spanish-Americans, Orientals—and as well of religious bigotries—anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism.

The time is past when we may find refuge in rationalizations. The very principles upon which our way of life is based are being dangerously challenged in the world-wide ideological struggle. To the realistic, even cynical, world of today, democratic profession has meaning only in democratic deeds. We cannot, for example, convert the vast masses of Asia and Africa to a democracy qualified by color. But it is vital to the future of human freedom in the world that these peoples, constituting the preponderance of the world's population, be attracted to the democratic way.

We must face the facts honestly. Those who may seek to find comfort in the concept of gradualism on the assumption that time, seen as an inexorable solvent, will eliminate the problem, now find that time has caught up with us. Today, our country needs desperately its maximum strength—its maximum manpower, unity and moral leadership. But in this very hour, our resources of manpower are squandered in racial strife and racial barriers to employment, our unity is disrupted by racial and religious animosities, and our prestige and moral leadership in the world suffer from the contradictions between the democratic ideals we proudly profess and the domestic practices of which we cannot boast. These contradictions have already cost us prestige, good will and more lives than we have needed to lose on far-off battlefields. In the future these costs in the lives of fine



American boys—white, black, brown, yellow and red—could be far greater, for the same reason.

In this critical period, it appears to me, we have two vital tasks to perform, even while, imperatively, we prepare and man our defenses. We must exert an extraordinary effort to put our interracial house in order. We must strive by our deeds to convince watchful peoples everywhere that we not only profess democracy, but that we deeply believe in it and live it, and that it is applicable to and good for all peoples, whatever their colour or creed.

To me, it seems that this is no super-human or impossible task for my country. It does not require that people of different colours or creeds must begin to clasp each other to their bosoms. It requires no revolution, beyond a psychological one. It does require a substantial change in the attitudes of many of our citizens and our legislators. This is nothing new for America. Within the past century we have seen radical changes in the attitudes of Americans toward many groups in the country—toward the Irish, the Scandinavians, the Polish, the Italians, the Germans, the Chinese, the Latin-Americans, the English and the American Indians. We have even seen Baptists and Methodists begin to speak to each other.

If I may speak for my own group, all that the American Negro asks is that he be treated like every other citizen—that he be accepted or rejected, not collectively, on the basis of his colour, but individually, on the basis of whatever merit he may command. In other words, he asks only the most elemental and fundamental prerogative of citizenship in a democracy—equality of treatment.

What true American can there be, whether from South or North, who would allege that this is too much for any citizen in a democracy to demand; or, indeed, that there could be a democratic society on any other basis?

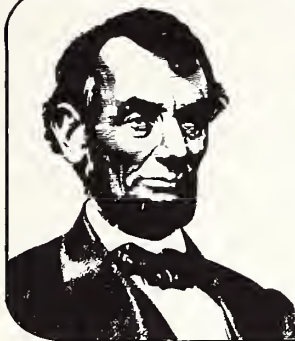
What kind of a patriot would he be, whether from North or South, who would insist that the nation, in its greatest hour of need, must be denied its full strength solely to ensure that one group of its loyal citizens shall be deprived of equal opportunity, as individuals and on their merits, to rise or fall in the society?

I have great faith in my fellow American citizens. I know that, preponderantly, their consciences are sensitive, their sense of fair play is deep seated, their belief in democracy is genuine and fervent, and that, once they cast off complacency and apathy, once aroused and resolved, their ability to solve problems, to do whatever must be done, is unlimited.

If I may be pardoned for a purely personal reference, I am proud to be an American and I am proud of my origin. I believe in the American way of life, and believing in it, deplore its imperfections. I wish to see my country strong in every way—strong in the nature and practice of its democratic way of life; strong in its world leadership; strong in both its material and spiritual values; strong in the hearts and minds of all of its people, whatever their race, colour or religion, and in their unshakeable devotion to it. I wish to see an America in which both the fruits and the obligations of democracy are shared by *all* of its citizens on a basis of full equality and without qualification of race or creed.

The United Nations ideal is a world in which peoples would "practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours." If this ideal is far from realization it is only because of the state of mind of mankind. Man's reason and calculated self-interest can be powerful forces for changes in that state of mind. No ideal could be more rewarding. Every individual today has it in his power—in his daily living, in his attitudes and practices—to contribute greatly to the realization of that ideal. We must be strong in our adherence to ideals. We must never lose faith in man's potential power for good.

In this regard, we in America have a historic mission. We are the architects of the greatest design for living yet conceived. We are demonstrating that men of all backgrounds and cultures can be solidly welded together in brotherhood by the powerful force of a noble ideal—individual liberty. To perfect our design for living we need only to demonstrate that democracy is colour blind. This we can, and with the support of all men and women of good will, we shall do. Surely, the Great Emancipator had deep faith that we would do so.



# Lincoln Lore

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## Emancipation: 113 Years Later

*Editor's Note:* I am indebted to Professor G. S. Boritt, formerly of Washington University in Saint Louis, for bringing the paper on which this *Lincoln Lore* is based to my attention. I am especially indebted to his student, Yvette Fulcher, for allowing me to see the results of her industrious survey of opinion on Abraham Lincoln among blacks today and to use that study as the basis for this article. I am performing strictly a reporter's role here; Ms. Fulcher asked all the questions, tabulated all the answers, and, in a word, did all the work. She had excellent guidance. Professor Boritt is the author of numerous articles on Lincoln, including "A Case of Political Suicide? Lincoln and the Mexican War" in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, and the forthcoming "The Voyage to the Colony of Linconia: The Sixteenth President, Black Colonization, and the Defense Mechanism of Avoidance." He is working on a book on Lincoln's economic thought. Ms. Fulcher was a freshman student in Professor Boritt's course on Abraham Lincoln last year and has, I am sure all will agree, a most promising future ahead of her.

It should be remembered that Ms. Fulcher attempts to quantify the unquantifiable. She had to make allowances in her final tabulations for intensity of feeling, tone of response, etc. Incidentally, the introductory remarks are altogether mine and are based, in part, on James M. McPherson's useful collection, *The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted during the War for the Union* (New York, 1965).

M. E. N., Jr.

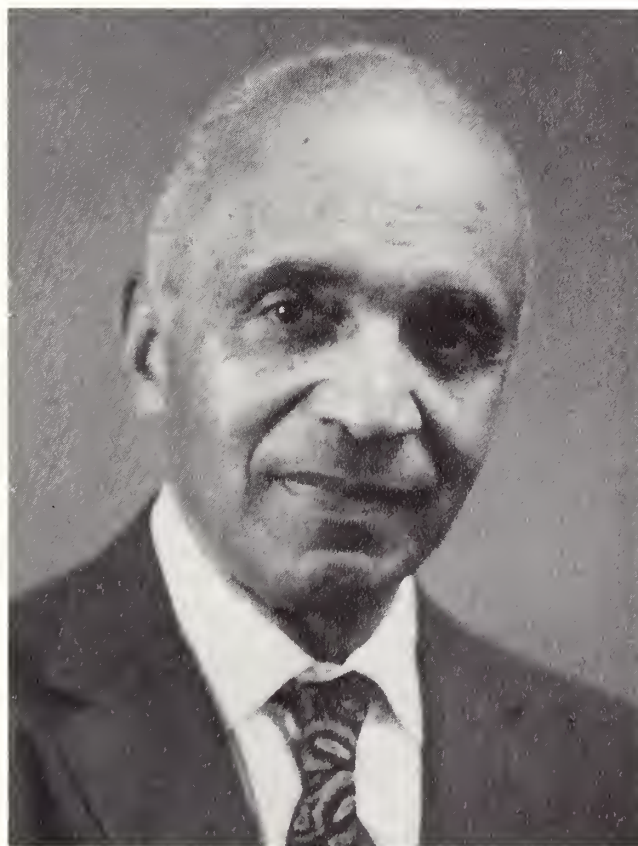
Skepticism among some black people greeted even Abraham Lincoln's first appearance on the national scene in 1860. H. Ford Douglass, an Illinois black leader, suggested at an abolitionist picnic on the Fourth of July in Framingham, Massachusetts, that "Abraham Lincoln is simply a Henry Clay Whig, and he believes just as Henry Clay believed. . . . And Henry Clay was just as odious to the anti-slavery cause and anti-slavery men as ever was John C. Calhoun. . . ." By degrees, the black orator worked up to the drastic assertion that "Abraham Lincoln, . . . is on the side of this Slave Power . . . , that has possession of the Federal Government." Douglass was misinformed on at least one point, for he said that Lincoln's proposal was "to let the people and the Territories regulate their domestic institutions in their own way." This was the solution, of course, of Stephen Douglass but not of Abraham Lincoln.

H. Ford Douglass represented only a minority among the black minority in 1860, and by 1865, his opinions had surely shrunk in influence. Even the first cautious rumblings of Lincoln's great emancipation policy were enthusiastically greeted by black men. When a message to Congress of March 6, 1862, suggested federal compensation to any state which moved to abolish slavery gradually, the *Anglo-African*, a Negro newspaper, called it "an event which sent a thrill of joy throughout christendom." The paper called it "a stroke of policy, grandly reticent on the part of its author, yet most timely and sagacious, which has secured for Abraham Lincoln a confidence and admiration on the part of the people, the whole loyal people, such as no man has enjoyed in the present era." Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation increased the enthusiasm in a crescendo which erupted into wild rejoicing when, on April 4, 1865, the Great Emancipator visited the conquered capital of the Confederacy. A Negro correspondent reported the scene of Lincoln's visit to Richmond this way:

The great event after the capture of the city was the arrival of President Lincoln in it. . . . There is no describing the scene along the route. The colored population was wild with enthusiasm. Old men thanked God in a very boisterous manner, and old women shouted upon the pavement as high as they had ever done at a religious revival. . . .

Everyone declares that Richmond never before presented such a spectacle of jubilee. It must be confessed that those who participated in the informal reception of the President were mainly negroes. There were many whites, but they were lost in the great concourse of American citizens of African descent. . . .

I visited yesterday several of the slave jails, where men, women, and children were confined, or herded, for the examination of purchases. . . . The owners, as soon as they were aware that we were coming, opened wide the doors and told the confined inmates they



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 1. Professor Benjamin Quarles



were free. The poor souls could not realize it until they saw the Union army. Even then they thought it must be a pleasant dream, but when they saw Abraham Lincoln they were satisfied that their freedom was perpetual. One enthusiastic old negro woman exclaimed: "I know that I am free, for I have seen Father Abraham and felt him."

When the President returned to the flag-ship of Admiral Porter, in the evening, he was taken from the wharf in a cutter. Just as he pushed off, amid the cheering of the crowd, another good old colored female shouted, "Don't drown Massa Abe, for God's sake!"

After President Lincoln was assassinated ten days later, Edgar Dinsmore, a black soldier from New York, wrote his fiancée:

We mourn for the loss of our great and good President as a loss irreparable. Humanity has lost a firm advocate, our race its Patron Saint, and the good of all the world a fitting object to emulate. . . . The name Abraham Lincoln will ever be cherished in our hearts, and none will more delight to lisp his name in reverence than the future generations of our people.

Most Lincoln students have suspected for some time that the predictions of eternal reverence for Lincoln on the part of American Negroes have proved to be in error. There have been some undercurrents of ambivalence all along. At the inaugural ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D. C., on April 14, 1876, "nearly all of the colored organizations in the city" heard Frederick Douglass, black abolitionist, give a memorable and prophetic address. He pointed out carefully that this was the first occasion on which black Americans "have sought to do honor to any American great man." Before Abraham Lincoln, he intimated, Negroes had had no reason to celebrate American history. Then, warning his audience that "Truth is proper and beautiful at all times and in all places," Douglass dropped his bombshell: "Abraham Lincoln was not, in the fullest sense of the word, either our man or our model. . . . He was pre-eminently the white man's President. . . ." Douglass conceded to his "white fellow-citizens, a pre-eminence in this worship" of Lincoln. "You are the children of Abraham Lincoln," he said. "We are at best only his step-children, children by adoption, children by force of circumstances and necessity." Douglass then catalogued the inadequacies he found in Lincoln's policies. Above all, "He was ready and willing at any time during the first years of his administration to deny, postpone and sacrifice the rights of humanity in the colored people, to promote the welfare of the white people of this country. . . . The Union was more to him than our freedom or our future. . . ." The specific charges were these:

. . . he tarried long in the mountain; . . . he strangely told us that we were the cause of the war; . . . he still more strangely told us to leave the land in which we were born; . . . he refused to employ our arms in the defence of the Union; . . . after accepting our services as colored soldiers, he refused to retaliate when we were murdered as colored prisoners; . . . he told us he would save the Union if he could with slavery; . . . he revoked the proclamation of emancipation of General Fremont; . . . he refused to remove the commander of the Army of the Potomac, who was more zealous in his efforts to protect slavery than suppress rebellion. . . .

Except for quotable quotes illustrating Lincoln's racial views before the Civil War, Douglass had laid out the black case against Lincoln largely as it has been laid out ever since by any black who disliked him. The quotable quotes and the public controversy necessary to make the case against Lincoln a subject for popular consumption were both provided, ironically, by the Citizens' Councils of America, white Southern groups which opposed passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In advertisements widely printed in major American newspapers, including the *Washington Post*, in February of 1964, the Citizens' Councils claimed that three quotations represented "Lincoln's Hopes for the Negro In His Own Words." Two of the three dealt with colonization, and the third was an answer to Stephen Douglas, protesting that he (Lincoln) was not "in favor of bringing about in any way the social and poli-

tical equality of the white and black races." The irony of this campaign was that it may have convinced blacks and left whites unconvinced. Congressman Fred Schwengel of Iowa, a member of the Bibliography Committee for *Lincoln Lore*, commented simply: "Sedulous selection, it is well known, can make the Scriptures seem the work of Satan."

Nevertheless, a period of black disillusionment, epitomized by Lerone F. Bennett's article in *Ebony* in 1968 ("Was Abe Lincoln a White Supremacist?"), began, and it has apparently reached deeply into the black community.

We can be sure of very little in this area because, despite its being a topic on which almost everyone has an opinion, scientific surveys of Negro opinion on Abraham Lincoln are few and far between. A brief check of our files at the Lincoln National Life Foundation uncovered no such surveys whatever. Therefore, the significance of Yvette Fulcher's survey of "The Attitudes of Blacks Today Toward Abraham Lincoln" is great. It provides us with our first concrete sampling of this very important segment of opinion on Abraham Lincoln.

Ms. Fulcher's survey was conducted by mail. One hundred twenty persons were contacted and all but thirteen responded. The questions were designed so as not to be loaded in favor of one answer or another and so as to be understandable to "not only a black Representative in the United States Congress . . . but also a black former convict with an eighth grade education." These are the six questions:

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the name "Abraham Lincoln?"
2. What is black colonization?
3. Was Abraham Lincoln good or bad for blacks in the 1860's?
4. Is Abraham Lincoln and what he stood for good or bad for blacks in 1974?
5. What is the Emancipation Proclamation?
6. What is your opinion of Abraham Lincoln?

Ms. Fulcher broke the responses down by some simple social classifications. Government officials, business executives, doctors, lawyers, and writers were classified as black professionals. Engineers, nurses, union leaders, school officials, and teachers were classified as higher white-collar workers. Firemen, policemen, social workers, secretaries, and soldiers were classified as lower white-collar workers. Dock workers, trash collectors, custodians, and assembly line workers were classified as wage or blue-collar workers. Another classification included the unemployed, welfare recipients, present and former convicts, and criminals. Mothers were considered a special classification as well, perhaps because of Ms. Fulcher's own reading of the importance of mothers in light of the history of the black family. The elderly were given a category to themselves, as were students.

The tabulated results of the survey, broken down according to these categories, appear below:

	Professionals					
	Question					
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Pro-Lincoln	3	4	4	3	4	4
Anti-Lincoln	12	10	13	14	13	13
Neutral	2	3	0	0	0	0

	Higher White-Collar					
	Question					
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Pro-Lincoln	9	3	5	5	6	6
Anti-Lincoln	10	13	13	12	13	13
Neutral	0	3	1	2	0	0

	Lower White-Collar					
	Question					
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Pro-Lincoln	16	16	17	17	17	17
Anti-Lincoln	4	3	4	3	4	4
Neutral	1	2	0	1	0	0

	Blue-Collar			Question		
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Pro-Lincoln	3	1	2	3	3	3
Anti-Lincoln	8	8	9	8	8	8
Neutral	0	2	0	0	0	0

	Unemployed			Question		
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Pro-Lincoln	2	1	2	2	2	2
Anti-Lincoln	6	6	6	6	6	6
Neutral	0	1	0	0	0	0

	Mothers			Question		
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Pro-Lincoln	3	1	1	1	1	1
Anti-Lincoln	0	2	2	2	2	2
Neutral	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Elderly			Question		
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Pro-Lincoln	2	2	2	2	0	2
Anti-Lincoln	0	0	0	0	2	0
Neutral	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Students			Question		
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Pro-Lincoln	4	3	5	5	5	5
Anti-Lincoln	21	20	20	20	21	20
Neutral	1	3	1	1	0	1

Summary of Survey			
	PRO-LINCOLN	ANTI-LINCOLN	TOTAL
PROFESSIONALS	4	13	17
HIGHER WHITE-COLLAR	6	13	19
LOWER WHITE-COLLAR	17	4	21
BLUE-COLLAR	3	8	11
UNEMPLOYED	2	6	8
MOTHERS	1	2	3
ELDERLY	2	0	2
STUDENTS	6*	20	26
TOTAL	41	66	107

\*Includes one neutral.

Ms. Fulcher provided an analysis of the figures and provided percentages which make the survey even more startling. Three-fourths of the black professionals are anti-Lincoln. Almost seventy percent of the higher white-collar workers are anti-Lincoln. Three-fourths of the black unemployed are anti-Lincoln. Two-thirds of the black mothers are less than enthusiastic about Lincoln. Almost eighty percent of black students are anti-Lincoln, and that figure, of course, practically guarantees that future surveys will not see these figures turned around for some time to come. Almost three-fourths of blue-collar workers are anti-Lincoln. Only the elderly and lower white-collar workers retain the respect black soldier Edgar Dinsmore predicted would be Lincoln's forever. All the elderly interviewed and eighty-one percent of the lower white-collar workers are pro-Lincoln.

Among black professionals, knowledge of Lincoln's activity in behalf of colonization is high. In fact, their opinions al-

most perfectly reproduce the opinions of black professional Frederick Douglass one hundred years ago. They feel that Lincoln freed the slaves too slowly and that he did so only to save the Union, but they do realize that, in the context of the 1860's, Lincoln's policies certainly helped blacks. The minority opinion among black professionals is well represented by historian Benjamin Quarles, author of *Lincoln and the Negro*, still the definitive treatment of that subject in the field of Lincolniana. Quarles feels that Lincoln moved as fast in behalf of the slaves as public opinion would permit.

Opinions among the higher white-collar workers are similar to those among professionals, and this is important, for the group includes the teachers who will shape future opinions on Lincoln. The thirty-two percent of higher white-collar workers who are pro-Lincoln are an interesting group. They know about colonization, too, but they interpret it as Lincoln's efforts to lead blacks to self-help in a congenial atmosphere. They also feel that Lincoln wanted freedom for all, black and white.

The rest of the groups seem less aware of colonization. Blue-collar workers and the unemployed distrust Lincoln's motives for emancipation as "political." Although Ms. Fulcher does not say so, these groups seem to share with particular intensity the pervasive distrust of politics in American society in general. Incidentally, the minority in these groups who are pro-Lincoln are very pro-Lincoln and consider him a savior who alone stood between blacks and a continuing slave status for many years to come.

Black mothers seem to blame Lincoln for the plight of the freedman after emancipation. Black students, like black professionals and higher white-collar workers, are anti-Lincoln because Lincoln, they say, used freedom as a means to the end of saving the Union.

Those groups which are pro-Lincoln seem to be as aware of the facts of Lincoln's career as those that are anti-Lincoln. They merely interpret the facts differently. The elderly, for example, are aware that the Emancipation Proclamation did not free all the slaves, but they trust Lincoln's way of going about freeing the slaves.

Lower white-collar workers see all the difference in the world between legal freedom and legal slavery, and therefore they enthusiastically admire Lincoln as the bringer of freedom. They dismiss Lincoln's interest in colonization because it was always a voluntary rather than forced colonization which he envisioned. The only dissenters in this group dislike Lincoln because the Emancipation Proclamation itself did not actually free all the slaves and because freedmen were left in a poor condition.

There are encouraging signs for Lincoln's reputation even in this rather dismal reading of the current barometer of opinion. Most encouraging to anyone interested in history is the rather high level of information among people not selected, apparently, on a basis of interest in history. Thirty years ago, even ten or twenty years ago, knowledge of the practical effectiveness of the Emancipation Proclamation, of Lincoln's interest in colonization, or of his letter to Horace Greeley explaining his policies as a function of his duty to save the Union were considered fine points, subtleties which were well known in the profession but which were unknown to the man in the street. Blacks probably have a higher awareness of such things than whites today because these things are absolutely central to their history and because their history has become a major area of emphasis in all public education. Whatever the case, all historians and students of history should rejoice to see that they have not been talking simply to each other, and that things that were professional subtleties yesterday are today's common knowledge.

In regard to Lincoln's views on race and his policies concerning slavery, the fundamental pieces of evidence have not changed since Frederick Douglass's day, but popular opinion has changed in many ways. The results of a survey taken years hence might be quite different. Among historians, the sensational anti-Lincoln arguments of the late 1960's are clearly taking a new turn, and this survey proves that these changes in opinion become widespread in time.



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1974

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1974-25

The Education of Abraham Lincoln/by William H. Armstrong/Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc./New York/ [Copyright 1974 by William H. Armstrong. All rights reserved.]

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1974-32

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Book, cloth, 10" x 6 1/4", fr., 231 pp., scenes of Lincoln-Douglas debates on inside front and back covers, illus., price, \$8.50. British edition.

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square of Lincoln's birthplace, Hodgenville, Kentucky./ Sculpture by Alexander Weinman./ Copyright, Illinois State Historical Society, 1975 (Device) 14 Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois/(Abraham Lincoln Issue)/

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1975-3

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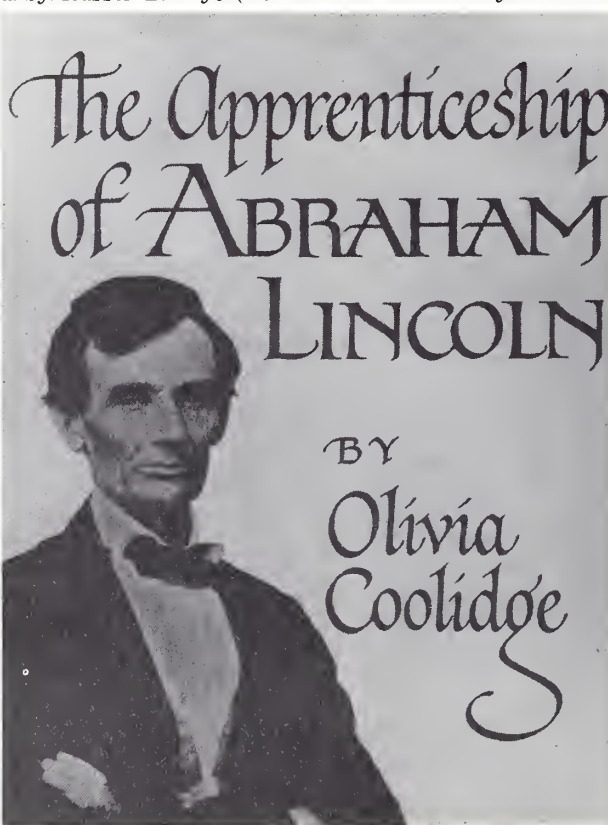
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# Lincoln Lore

March, 1978

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Number 1681

## BLACK IMAGES OF LINCOLN IN THE AGE OF JIM CROW

by John David Smith

*Editor's Note:* The author of this article, John David Smith, joined the staff of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum in June, 1977. He received a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Kentucky, where he studied slavery and the Civil War. His numerous publications include "The Recruitment of Negro Soldiers in Kentucky, 1863-1865" in *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* (October, 1974) and "Keep 'em in a fire-proof vault" — Pioneer Southern Historians Discover Plantation Records" to appear in *The South Atlantic Quarterly*.

M.E.N., Jr.

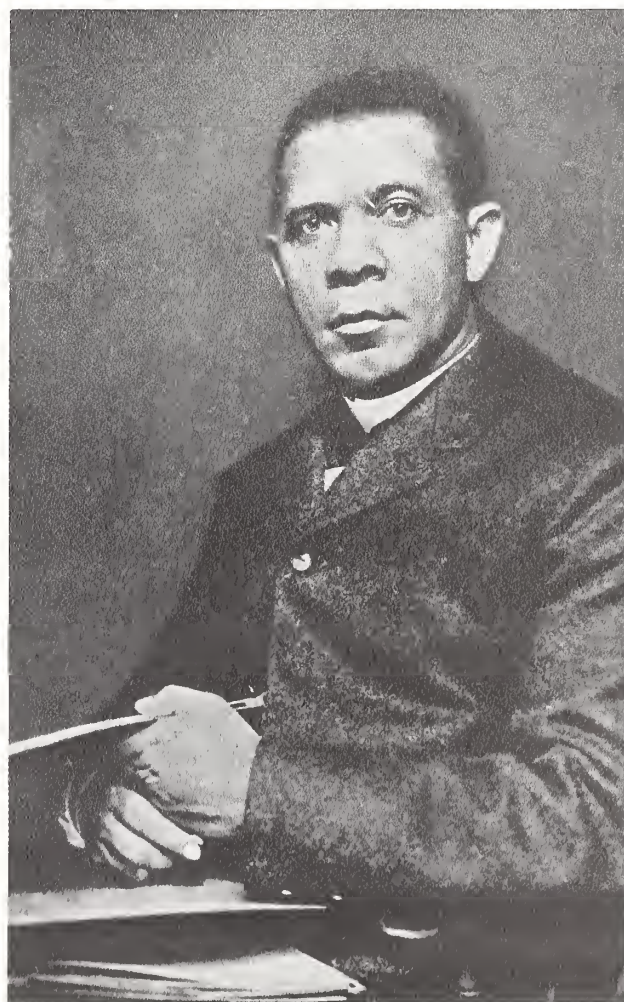
The years 1890-1920, a period of multifaceted reform which historians label the Progressive Era, was anything but an age of progress for American blacks. Driven by a variety of motives, Progressives instituted such diverse reforms as the direct primary, homogenization of milk, sanitation, conservation, and woman suffrage. But the Progressive movement had little interest in blacks and was notably backward looking on the race issue. As C. Vann Woodward has argued, the movement in the South — where almost 90 percent of American blacks lived — was largely "for whites only." And Northern reformers, too, tended to eliminate blacks from the fruits of reform.<sup>1</sup> A different movement was under way in these years which affected Negroes — one characterized by disfranchisement, legalized segregation, and proscription. The age of reaction in race relations bred an unprecedented increase in lynchings and anti-Negro riots, North and South. From 1885 to 1915 almost 3,000 lynchings of blacks were recorded. Racial hostility was at its peak when in August, 1908, one of the most shameful of the race riots broke out in Springfield, Illinois, a city the nation associated with Abraham Lincoln. Blacks were lynched within a short distance of the Lincoln home and within two miles of the Lincoln tomb. The upheaval left Negro businesses destroyed and black families driven from their homes.<sup>2</sup>

The riot and lynchings at Springfield shocked the national conscience, perhaps moreso because it occurred so close to the centennial of Lincoln's birth. Such mob violence and the general anti-black temper of American society forced blacks to seek ways of advancement either within the narrow sphere allotted them by the whites or by challenging the existing racial status quo. Significantly, many blacks writing in the Progressive Era looked to Lincoln's life in search of ways to combat Jim Crowism. Lincoln's life lent itself to symbolic use because, most black writers argued, it was dedicated to racial equality. Throughout the period Lincoln's imposing character became a silent partner for blacks in their fight against Progressive racism.

Booker T. Washington was the most prominent black leader of the day. He, more than any other Negro author, spread the message which Lincoln's life held for blacks of the Progressive Era. Born a slave in Virginia in 1856, Washington worked his way through Hampton Institute and ultimately became principal of the black vocational school at Tuskegee, Alabama. Washington's long-range goal was the "complete

and unqualified integration of the Negro into American society." But he was a realist; he recognized that the level of discrimination against blacks dictated that the race take gradual steps toward reaching its goal. Consequently, he encouraged blacks to make economic independence their first attainment.<sup>3</sup>

In simple, pleasing, Christian terms, Washington placated



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Booker T. Washington.



white supremacists and urged blacks to accept the Jim Crow separation of the races as a temporary expedient. With the financial support of Northern philanthropists he transformed the curriculum of Southern schools for blacks. Gradually, an emphasis on vocational training on the Hampton model replaced the classics taught in the Reconstruction period. As an advisor to Presidents Roosevelt and Taft, Washington had special influence on Negro life in the South because he held strong control over patronage for blacks in the region. Even more revealing about his complex personality was Washington's work as a behind-the-scenes activist against anti-Negro legislation and black leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois and William Monroe Trotter who disagreed with his conciliatory racial policy. Washington's thought is difficult to analyze because he "gave a deceptive appearance of freely bowing to Southern demands by repeating much of the white man's propaganda."<sup>4</sup>

Because he was the most influential American Negro of his age, people listened when Washington spoke. And he spoke often about Abraham Lincoln. On numerous occasions the black leader explained how Lincoln's simplicity and patience, his honesty and determination, offered special messages for Negroes. Washington was keenly sensitive to the use of symbol and imagery in both the printed and spoken word. Lincoln served Washington well in his gospel of self-help and economic advancement — what some contemporary critics denounced as accommodationism.

Washington rated Lincoln a perfect model for blacks. Writing in 1877 to the editor of the *West Virginia Journal*, he cited Lincoln — "who rose from the humble log cabin to the Presidency of the greatest republic on earth" — as an example of the American success story. Like many Southern blacks, Lincoln too was once poor. But he had the courage, resolve, and desire to succeed. Throughout life Lincoln took advantage of things available to him and never despaired at seemingly insurmountable odds.<sup>5</sup> Washington also employed Lincoln in his many talks and lectures. Usually in a preachy, didactic tone, he idealized the Emancipator and drove home his formula for Negro advancement.

Lincoln read the Bible, said Washington, and he urged his students at Tuskegee to "Read your Bibles every day, and you will find how healthily you will grow." Following in Lincoln's footsteps, blacks were to practice self-denial. "This is the secret of Abraham Lincoln's success in life, that great man, . . . slept on a bed of leaves without any covering in a log cabin. He practised [*sic*] this self-denial, and it gave him an element of strength which won for him the name of the 'first American.'" Honesty, another trait which Washington associated with Lincoln, was a prerequisite for blacks if they too were to advance. Recounting how scrupulous with government money Lincoln was as a postal clerk, Washington asserted that such honesty "helped him along to the presidency."<sup>6</sup>

Between 1896 and 1909 Washington was a frequent speaker at Lincoln Day celebrations before Northern white audiences. Over the years, although the details and examples which he used varied, his message changed little. First, he shocked the audience by informing them that his earliest recollection of Lincoln was as a slave. "Night after night, . . . on an old slave plantation in Virginia, I recall the form of my sainted mother bending over a batch of rags that enveloped my body, on a dirt floor, breathing a fervent prayer to Heaven that 'Marsa Lincoln' might succeed, and that one day she and I might be free." The Tuskegeean, however, sought not to revive sectional animosities. Instead, he emphasized how Lincoln was the saviour of Southern whites as well as blacks. When the slaves were freed, said Washington, Southern whites too were freed "to breathe the air of unfettered freedom; a freedom from dependence on others' labor to the independence of self-labor; . . . to change the Negro from an ignorant man to an intelligent man; [and] to change sympathies that were local and narrow into love and good will for all mankind."<sup>7</sup>

When addressing groups of Northern philanthropists, Washington asked them how they could "help the South and



Courtesy Library of Congress, from  
*Dictionary of American Portraits*,  
Dover Publications, Inc., 1967

FIGURE 2. W.E.B. DuBois.

the Negro in the completion of Lincoln's work?" To achieve "that higher emancipation" — whereby the races would live in true harmony and interdependence — required more and better schools for blacks. When he courted "the active aid and sympathy of every patriotic citizen in the North," the implication was, of course, that Northern dollars invested in Southern black vocational schools like Tuskegee would reap rich benefits for all Americans. Already, he wrote in 1896, blacks had progressed economically and educationally — in the process "proving ourselves worthy of the confidence of our great emancipator." Just as Lincoln emancipated the bondsmen, education now was serving to train blacks in Lincoln's own "habits of thrift, skill, economy and substantial character."<sup>8</sup>

In an age of race-baiting and lynching, Washington counseled blacks not to hate the whites. Like Lincoln, he wrote, the black race must "have the courage to refuse to hate others because it is misunderstood or abused." Virtually advising Negroes not to answer white mobs with force, Washington informed them that "We must remember that no one can degrade us except ourselves, and that if we are worthy no influence can defeat us." The *New York Times* found Washington's tone "remarkable" coming from the leader of a race "recently enslaved and still most unreasonably reviled and despitely treated." The editor predicted that if Lincoln were still alive he would have welcomed the black leader's sound advice.<sup>9</sup>

In spite of his commitment to nonviolence, Washington did not allow the Springfield lynchings and race riot to pass without comment. Recognizing the tragic irony of such mob rule in Lincoln's own Springfield, he urged upon men of both races the importance of putting into daily practice the lessons of Lincoln's life. Patience and understanding, Washington informed an officer of the Lincoln Centennial Association, could not be virtues of blacks alone but had to be practiced by whites too. Washington then rebuked Springfield's white



community for their lawlessness.

... no man [he argued] who hallows the name of Lincoln will inflict injustice upon the negro because he is a negro or because he is weak. Every act of injustice, or law breaking, growing out of the presence of the negro, seeks to pull down the great temple of justice and law and order which he gave his life to make secure. ... Just in the degree that both races, ... exhibit the high qualities of self-control and liberality which Lincoln exhibited in his own life, we will show that in reality we love and honor his name, and both races will be lifted into a high atmosphere of serv[il]ce to each other.<sup>10</sup>

In stark contrast to Washington on almost all matters concerning their race was William Edward Burghardt DuBois. Proud of his free black origins, DuBois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in 1868. Summarizing his mixed racial background, he claimed to have been born "with a flood of Negro blood, a strain of French, a bit of Dutch, but, thank God! no 'Anglo-Saxon.'" After receiving his Ph.D. in history from Harvard, DuBois went on to become one of America's great black intellectuals. He was a prolific author and a pioneer field researcher in "Negro problems." But it was as a polemicist that DuBois left his mark on Americans, black and white. Denouncing racism in every form, he was an outspoken critic of segregationist practices. In the years after 1903, he became a bitter critic of Washington, who DuBois believed was too conservative, too accommodating to white supremacists. In contrast to Washington, DuBois favored higher education and unqualified equal rights for blacks. Aristocratic, aloof, and arrogant, DuBois demanded respect for Negroes. He never wavered in his battle against what he deemed life under the malignant veil of racism.<sup>11</sup>

Yet curiously, in most of his writings, DuBois differed little with Washington in his judgments of Lincoln. In 1913, for example, he referred to him as "the great man who began the emancipation of the Negro race in America and the emancipation of America itself." Several years earlier, addressing residents of Chicago's Hull House, DuBois urged his listeners to emulate Lincoln in their deeds and thoughts. Describing Lincoln as "a great man, one of the world's greatest men," the black lecturer pointed to three qualities which made him so: his unusual clearness of vision and thought, his ability to grow intellectually, and his patience in all things. DuBois cited Lincoln as the embodiment of American ideals. From humble origins, Lincoln was never impressed with false pretension. Rather, he established his own criterion for what mattered in life. And because he was contemplative, said DuBois, Lincoln's ideas matured as his responsibilities increased. He cited as evidence of this, Lincoln's position on slavery. When elected to the Presidency, Lincoln was anti-slavery — not radical — on the race issue. But, DuBois stressed, as he gave the plight of blacks additional reflection, Lincoln came to adopt abolitionist principles.<sup>12</sup>

In 1922, DuBois struck a markedly different chord when praising Lincoln. In doing so, DuBois expressed an undercurrent of black thought that, although voiced infrequently, was harshly critical of the Great Emancipator. Writing in *The Crisis*, the organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, DuBois described Lincoln as ... a Southern poor white, of illegitimate birth, poorly educated and unusually ugly, awkward, ill-dressed. He liked smutty stories and was a politician down to his toes. Aristocrats ... despised him, and indeed he had little outwardly that compelled respect. But in that curious human way he was big inside. He had reserves and depths and when habit and convention were torn away there was something left to Lincoln ... There was something left, so that at the crisis he was big enough to be inconsistent — cruel, merciful; peace-loving, a fighter; despising Negroes and letting them fight and vote; protecting slavery and freeing slaves. He was a man — a big, inconsistent, brave man.<sup>13</sup>

Not surprisingly, DuBois' words were anathema to Lincolnophiles. A flood of letters poured into *The Crisis* stating displeasure with such blasphemous language. But DuBois was ready for his critics. He urged all disbelievers to check the

authenticity of his statements at any library. For those sensitive to his charges of Lincoln's racism he recommended study of the Emancipator's Charleston, Illinois, speech of 1858. It was crucial for blacks, thought DuBois, not to be so uncritical of white heroes like Lincoln. Afro-Americans should search for the truth regarding all men and measures.<sup>14</sup>

DuBois admitted that it would be easier to sanctify, to "whitewash" Lincoln. But then the irony of his life would be lost. "I love him," he wrote "not because he was perfect but because he was not and yet triumphed." According to DuBois, the world contained many Abraham Lincolns — lost souls with seamy backgrounds. Lincoln's life could serve as a model for these persons: "... personally I revere him the more because up out of his contradictions and inconsistencies he fought his way to the pinnacles of earth and his fight was within as well as without."<sup>15</sup>

The strain of criticism of Lincoln suggested by DuBois was more fully developed by black lawyer and civil rights activist Archibald H. Grimké. Born a slave in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1849, Grimké was a nephew of the famous Grimké sisters. A graduate of Lincoln University and Harvard Law School, he served as U.S. Consul in Santo Domingo from 1894-1898. Like DuBois, Grimké was an early supporter of Washington's philosophy for Negro advancement but grew dissatisfied and became a leading force in the N.A.A.C.P. In Washington's opinion, Grimké was "a noisy, turbulent and unscrupulous" individual "more bent upon notoriety and keeping up discord than any other motive." An outspoken critic of Jim Crow laws, Grimké testified before Congressional committees on the deleterious effects of segregation and disfranchisement on blacks and whites. A distinguished black historian, he was awarded the N.A.A.C.P.'s Spingarn medal in 1919 — the highest achievement for an Afro-American citizen.<sup>16</sup>

Grimké was very critical of Lincoln, and to idolaters of the Great Emancipator he must have seemed "noisy, turbulent



Courtesy Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

FIGURE 3. Archibald H. Grimké.



and unscrupulous." What troubled Grimké most about Lincoln was how far short he fell when compared with abolitionist leaders such as Charles Sumner and William Lloyd Garrison. The author of biographies of these men, Grimké chided Lincoln because "At no time before or after his election to the Presidency" was he "a friend of the slaves in the same sense" as were the two Massachusetts abolitionists. "It is the universal vogue now to sing the praises of Mr. Lincoln," wrote Grimké in 1900, "and I too will join heartily and without stint in all merited panegyric upon his greatness." But there were limits to how far he would go.<sup>17</sup>

Grimké accused Lincoln of never holding a strong commitment to abolishing slavery. Rather, he idolized the Constitution — "with all of its slave compromises" — and was dedicated to preserving the Union — "with its shameful inequality and oppression of the blacks." Grimké faulted Lincoln because abolition "was never his life purpose." For Lincoln, charged Grimké, "The right of the slave to freedom had no more practical weight . . . , when set over against the peace or prosperity, or preservation of . . . [the] Union, than would have had, if such a thing was possible, the right to freedom of the imaginary inhabitants of Mars." Grimké found Lincoln especially vulnerable to criticisms of his lethargy in dealing with the problem of slaves entering Federal lines during the Civil War. "He was strangely slow and reluctant to change his policy on this question, strangely averse from abating one jot or tittle of the laws on the national statute book in favor of the masters."<sup>18</sup>

Grimké lamented that the Emancipation Proclamation was inspired by practical considerations, not humanitarian values. Lincoln was not a true friend of human liberty and the Negro race in the spirit of Sumner or Garrison, he said. Grimké urged blacks to revise their opinions of Lincoln: ". . . let us be done, once and forever, with all this literary twaddle and glamour, fiction and myth-making." He asked members of his race to challenge the "wonder-yarns which white men spin of themselves, their deeds and demigods." But his argument went beyond whether Negroes should idolize or criticize Abraham Lincoln. Grimké used his assault on the Sixteenth President as a forum from which to incite Progressive Era blacks to make their own judgments; to assert their own feelings and opinions.

It seems to me [wrote Grimké] that it is high time for colored Americans to look at Abraham Lincoln from their own standpoint, instead of from that of their white fellow-citizens. We have surely a point of view equally with them for the study of this great man's public life, wherein it touched and influenced our history. Then why are we invariably found in their place on this subject, as on kindred ones, and not in our own? Are we never to find ourselves and our real thought on men and things . . . , for fear of giving offence? Are we to be forever a trite echo, an insignificant "me too" to the white race in America on all sorts of questions . . . ? Is it due to some congenital race weakness, or to environment, to the slave blood which is still abundant in our veins, that we rate instinctively and unconsciously whatever appertains to them as better than the corresponding thing which appertains to ourselves . . . ? Are we never to acquire a sense of proportion and independence of judgment, but must go on with our brains befuddled with the white man's prodigiously magnified opinion of himself and achievements? . . . For if we are ever to occupy a position in America other than that of mere dependents and servile imitators of the whites, we must emancipate ourselves from this species of slavery. . . . With whom then can we more appropriately begin this work of intellectual emancipation than with Abraham Lincoln, the emancipator?<sup>19</sup>

Years before the turn of the century black Americans looked to Abraham Lincoln for inspiration and meaning in life. He was a symbol of hope for the freedmen; his name was a watchword for victory and freedom. Lincoln's image came to have a special significance for blacks in the Progressive Era — the

nadir in the history of race relations in America. Racial equality in these years was at best a pipe dream. Lynchings, mob action, disfranchisement — humiliations of all kinds — characterized the reality of black life. It was to Lincoln that blacks again turned in their search for guidance, for an explanation of their proscribed world. The conflicting ideologies of black leaders like Washington, DuBois, and Grimké were mirrored in their interpretations of Lincoln. Washington, ever complex in motive and method, represented the attitudes of most Negro Americans: Lincoln was a Christ-like figure. Surprisingly, DuBois was more favorable in his judgments of Lincoln than might be suspected. Still, he was quick to note Lincoln's inconsistencies, especially his view of colonization as the best method of disposing of the "problem" of the American Negro. Grimké used his criticisms of Lincoln to communicate a broad message to his race: blacks must question and probe. Filiopietism of white leaders would no longer serve the best interests of blacks. For Washington, DuBois, and Grimké, Lincoln's life was filled with lessons — lessons in love, humanity, and realism.

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<sup>5</sup>Louis R. Harlan, ed., *The Booker T. Washington Papers* (5 vols.; Urbana, 1972-1976), II, 73.

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San Francisco Examiner

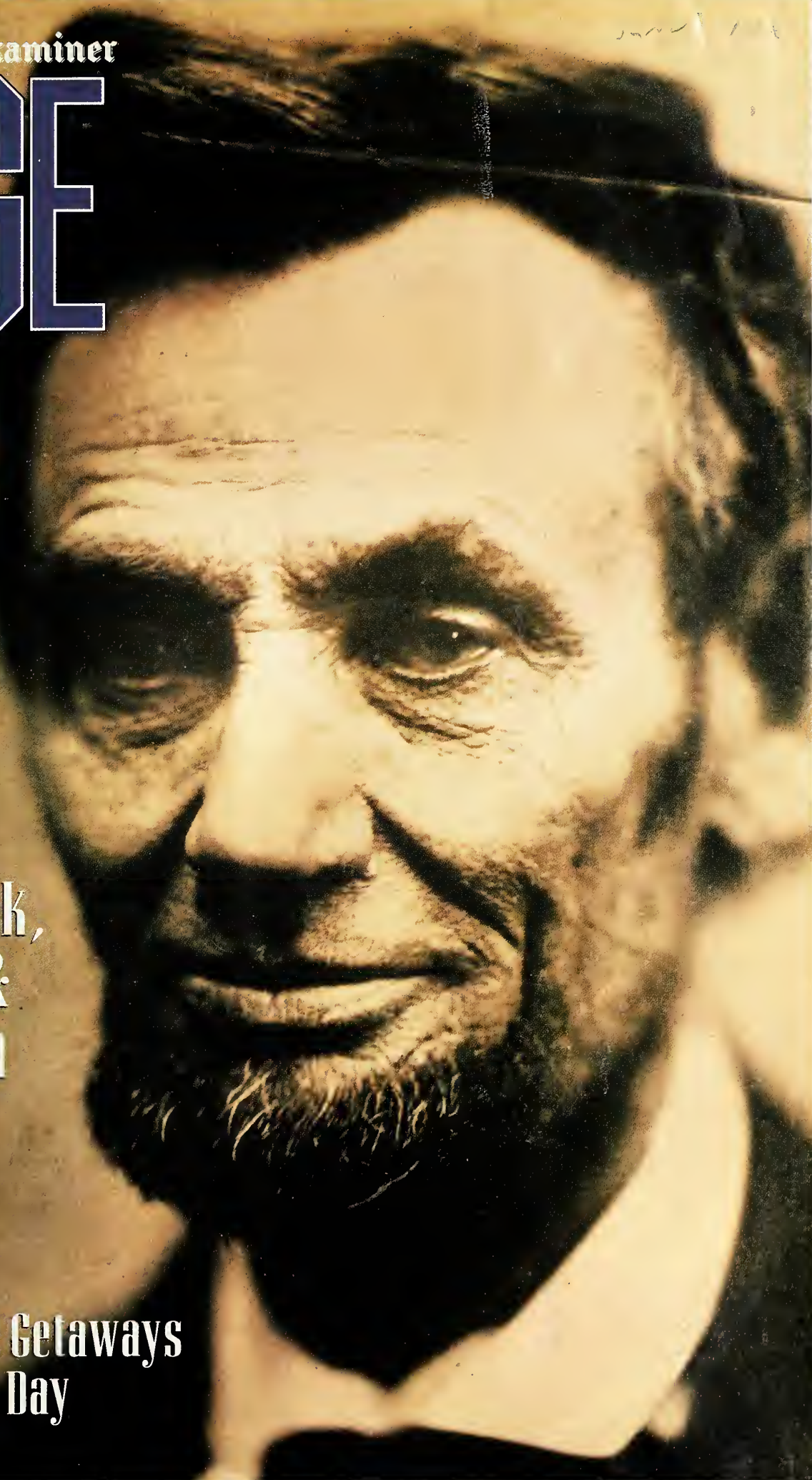
# IMAGE

FEBRUARY 7, 1993

## Lincoln's Legacy

Leon Litwack,  
Gore Vidal &  
Noah Griffin  
square off

Plus: Romantic Getaways  
for Valentine's Day





# LINCOLN

A coldly legalistic proclamation became a defining moral statement — a

BY LEON F. LITWACK

**N**o single event in the history of black Americans assumed greater symbolic importance than emancipation. The moment was even captured in bronze. The Freedmen's Monument, located in Lincoln Park in Washington, D.C., depicts a benign-looking Abraham Lincoln, his right hand grasping the Emancipation Proclamation while his left hand is poised above the head of a humble, kneeling slave. The shackles on the slave's wrists are broken. That image of Lincoln the Great Emancipator is engraved on the American memory. In 1940, it would grace a commemorative postage stamp honoring the 75th anniversary of the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery.

The unveiling of the monument, in April 1876, on the 11th anniversary of Lincoln's assassination, was a grand event in Washington society. President Ulysses S. Grant was there, along with his cabinet officers, the Supreme Court justices and other government dignitaries. Appropriately, the principal speaker was Frederick Douglass, who had risen from the anonymity of slavery to become the nation's leading black spokesman. Douglass paid tribute to the martyred president as "the man of our redemption." Under his leadership, "we saw ourselves gradually lifted from the depths of slavery to the heights of liberty and manhood."

But Douglass went further. Whatever this festive occasion demanded, Douglass refused to gloss over the ambiguities in Lincoln's reputation as the Great Emancipator. "Truth compels me to admit, even here in the presence of the monument we have erected to his memory, Abraham Lincoln was not, in the fullest sense of the word, either our man or our model ... He was preeminently the white man's president."

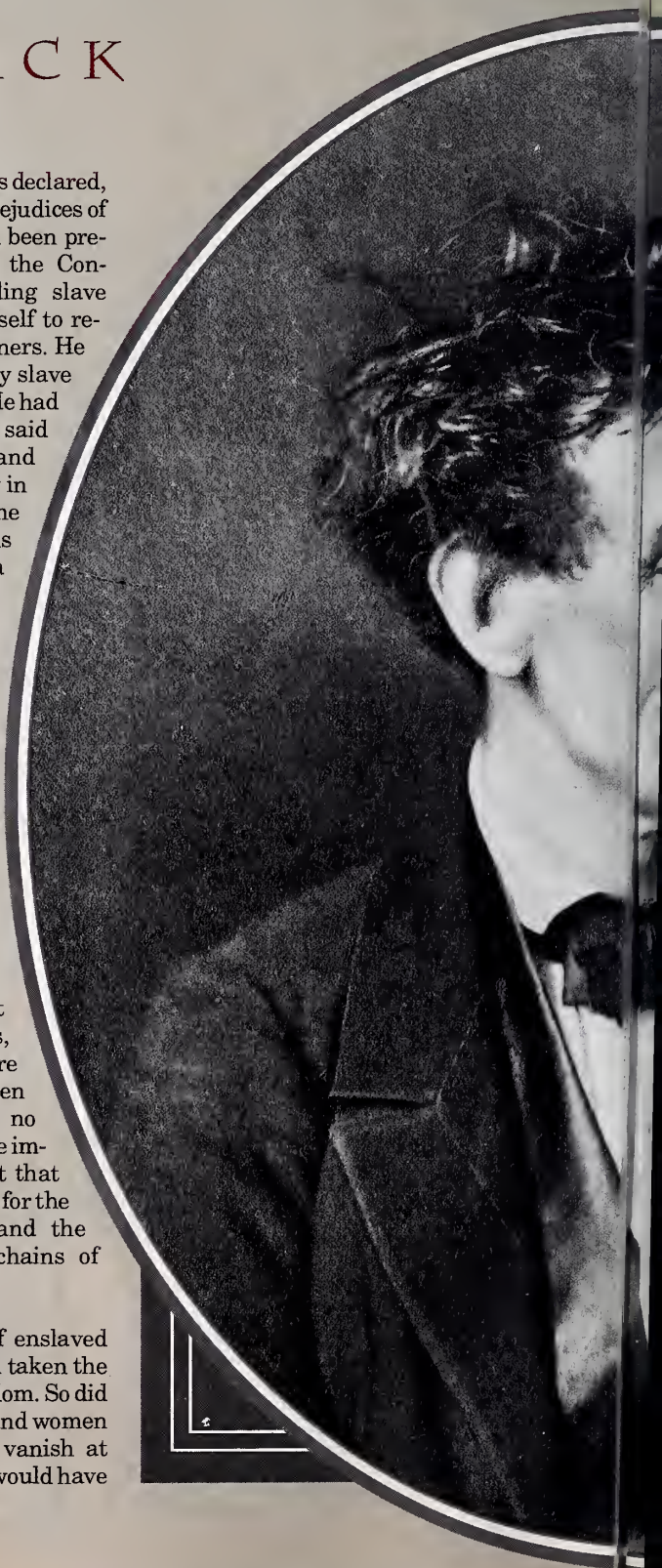
In his associations, in his habits of

thought, in his policies, Douglass declared, Lincoln had shared the racial prejudices of most white Americans. He had been prepared to invoke and execute the Constitutional guarantees regarding slave property. He had pledged himself to return fugitive slaves to their owners. He had stood ready to suppress any slave uprising, even during the war. He had been "ready and willing," said Douglass, "to deny, postpone and sacrifice the rights of humanity in the colored people to promote the welfare of the white people of this country." Looking out at the sea of faces in the audience, almost all of them white, Douglass told them: "First, midst, and last, you and yours were the objects of his deepest affection and his most earnest solicitude. You are the children of Abraham Lincoln. We are at best only his step-children; children by adoption, children by forces of circumstances and necessity."

Only later, in retrospect, did Frederick Douglass come to object to the impression left by the Freedmen's Monument he had helped to dedicate. It showed the slave on his knees, Douglass observed, "when a more manly attitude would have been indicative of freedom." What no doubt troubled Douglass was the impression left by the monument that the slaves had waited passively for the white man (Massa Lincoln and the Union Army) to break the chains of bondage.

Douglass knew better.

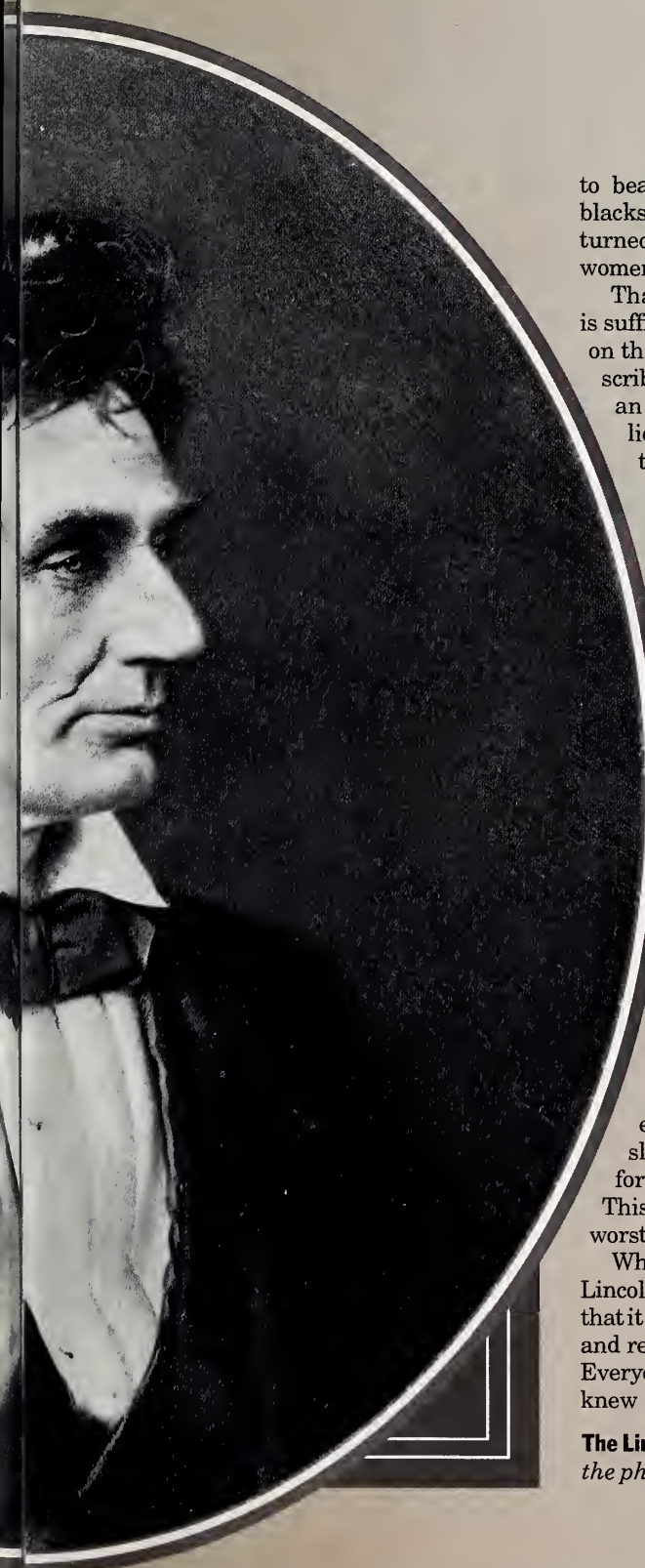
So did tens of thousands of enslaved black men and women who had taken the initiative in claiming their freedom. So did countless southern white men and women who had seen their property vanish at some point in the war and who would have





# S LEGACY

and a shrewd politician became the most revered president in our history.



to bear witness as many of the freed blacks choosing to remain with them turned into unrecognizable men and women.

That Abraham Lincoln hated slavery is sufficiently clear. But his ability to act on that feeling was at all times circumscribed by political considerations and an appreciation of the dominant public sentiment. He was not an abolitionist, nor did he believe in racial equality or that the American people would ever accept black people as equals. He took seriously his oath to uphold the Constitution, including the protections it afforded the enslavement of black men and women, and during the war he made clear on numerous occasions that he was willing to preserve slavery if necessary to preserve the Union.

Like most black abolitionists, Douglass had harbored few illusions about Lincoln. "Slavery will be as safe, and safer, in the Union under such a president," Douglass wrote, "than it can be under any president of a Southern Confederacy." Lincoln's inaugural address only reinforced that conviction. He denied not only the lawful right but even the "inclination" to disturb slavery, and he pledged a strict enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act. This was "but little better than our worst fears," Douglass wrote.

When war became unavoidable, Lincoln vowed from the very beginning that it would not "degenerate into a violent and remorseless revolutionary struggle." Everyone, most of all black abolitionists, knew what Lincoln meant. So did

Congress, which resolved that the only objective of the war was to preserve the Union. Lincoln and the North expected a quick victory. For the antislavery cause, that would have been a disaster. What black abolitionists feared was the very real possibility that the Union might be preserved by making major concessions to the South — that is, by a negotiated peace leaving slavery strengthened. Perhaps only an extended war, even disastrous Union military reversals were necessary — anything to awaken the northern people to the need to wage a different kind of war. "Terrible as it is," said Douglass of the Confederate victory at Bull Run, it would have a desirable impact on public opinion.

To black abolitionists, the way to win the war seemed absolutely clear. The most effective way to strike at the Confederacy was "to strike down slavery itself" and enlist blacks in an army of liberation. "Arrest that hoe in the hands of the Negro," Douglas argued, "and you smite rebellion in the very seat of its life." But Lincoln was not listening. He rejected black enlistments. He vowed not to interfere with slave property. And more than a year after the war began, in September 1862, he offered the South the opportunity to come back into the Union with slavery intact.

Until the fall of 1862 the Civil War remained the limited war that Lincoln, Congress and the Northern people had initially sanctioned. But the expected victory did not materialize, and a war-weary North needed to consider alternatives. Only "dire necessity," concluded a frustrated and despairing Douglass, might compel the president to move in a different direction.

Douglass was right. That it became a different kind of war than either President Lincoln or the Northern people en-

**The Lincoln look:** Lincoln put his hair "in a bad tousle" for this photograph, telling the photographer that people wouldn't recognize him without an unruly mane.

COURTESY THE LINCOLN MUSEUM, FORT WAYNE, IND.



Black abolitionists believed the war could be won by striking down slavery itself. "Arrest that hoe in the hands of the Negro," Douglass argued, "and you smite rebellion in the very seat of its life." But Lincoln was not listening.

visaged or wanted was in large part a product of military necessity. The military stalemate, the mounting casualty lists, unfilled recruitment quotas, the rise in desertions, growing antiwar sentiment at home, thousands of soldiers returning home after their initial enlistment period ran out (around 1863), and the fact that tens of thousands of slaves were claiming their freedom as soon as the Yankees approached (more than half a million fled to the Union lines) — all of these factors influenced Lincoln to contemplate emancipation as a necessary measure to win the war and maintain the integrity of the Union. "Things had gone from bad to worse," he confided a year later to F.B. Carpenter, the artist-in-residence at the White House. "...Until I felt that we had reached the end of our rope on the plan of operations we had been pursuing; that we had about played our last card, and must change our tactics, or lose the game. I now determined upon the adoption of the emancipation policy ..."

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued in September of 1862 and effective Jan. 1, 1863, would come to be celebrated in history for what it was not: a profound moral commitment to black freedom. Indeed, by calculation, it was devoid of any moral content. Lincoln chose his words carefully. He defended emancipation as "a fit and necessary war measure" aimed at suppressing the rebellion, "an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity," and issued by him in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy. A cold and legalistic document, it freed slaves only where the president had no authority to free them — that is, in areas still under Confederate control. It exempted the loyal slave states, as it did those counties in Virginia and parishes in Louisiana occupied by Union troops. Lincoln would later estimate that some 200,000 slaves gained their freedom under his proclamation — about one in 20 of the total number of slaves.

Lincoln had his reasons. The consummate politician, he knew he would have difficulty persuading the Northern public, most of whom embraced white supremacy, to accept as radical a move as emancipation. By resting his action on the narrowest possible ground — military necessity — the president hoped to maximize public support. It would not be easy. Mirroring the divisions and dominant racial attitudes in the North, the Union Army acted as reluctant liberators, as grudging emancipators.

After examining the proclamation carefully, Douglass found it "extremely defective," far too limited in its coverage, and "apparently inspired by the low motive of military necessity." This was not a proclamation of liberty "such as we had hoped it would be." But Douglass refused to dwell upon these flaws, choosing instead to put the best possible face on the president's action. "The change in the attitude of the government is vast and startling," he declared. "I feel that we are living in a glorious time. I felt so on the first of

January, and have been feeling so ever since. I felt whiter, and I have combed my hair with less difficulty."

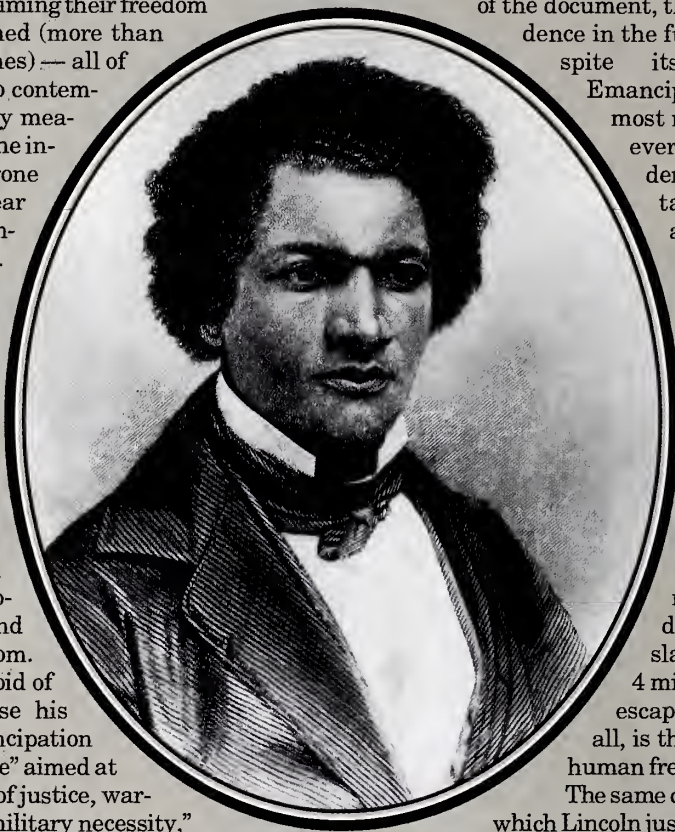
What Douglass professed to see in the proclamation was "a life and power" that went beyond the legalisms and omissions. It was the potential that had been unleashed, not the precise wording of the document, that gave blacks a new kind of confidence in the future. Whatever its limits, and despite its pedestrian language, the Emancipation Proclamation remains the most radical, the most revolutionary act ever executed by an American president. Employing massive federal military power, Lincoln chose to attack and cancel what the Constitution ostensibly protected: an enormous investment in what many white Americans considered to be private property. In doing so, he altered the very nature of the Civil War, turning the otherwise meaningless carnage into something higher and nobler.

If the Union had been preserved without abolishing slavery, it would not have been a Union worth saving. If the South had made good on its quest for independence, it would have prolonged the enslavement and brutalization of nearly 4 million black men and women. The inescapable tragedy of the Civil War, after all, is that it had to be fought. The cause of human freedom required no less.

The same consideration of military necessity by which Lincoln justified emancipation also made possible the recruitment and use of black soldiers. The exclusion of blacks worked only so long as the government and the Northern people thought they could win the war without them. With some 200,000 black recruits inducted into the Union Army, the Civil War became, indeed, a very different kind of war.

Not even a film as good as *Glory* is able to capture that extraordinary moment when uniformed and armed black men, most of them recently slaves, marched through the Southern countryside as an army of occupation and liberation. For many Southern whites, no moment in the entire war brought them more anguish, fear and humiliation. For many black Americans, no moment instilled in them greater pride and satisfaction. "Now we soldiers are men — men the first time in our lives," declared a black sergeant with the 1st South Carolina Volunteers. "Now we can look our old masters in the face. They used to sell and whip us, and we did not dare say one word. Now we ain't afraid, if they meet us, to run the bayonet through them."

None of the "great battles," not even Antietam, Shiloh or Gettysburg, compare in sheer drama with the way the Civil War was transformed into a social revolution of such far-reaching proportions. The story of how the slaves, more than any act of Congress or presidential proclamation, helped to free themselves and undermine the authority of the planter class is replete with drama, paradox and irony. (Unfortunately, Ken Burns' much-acclaimed *Civil War* series







**Frederick Douglass**, at left, called Lincoln "the white man's president." An 1863 recruiting poster, above, showed black soldiers and their white officer at Camp "William Penn" in Pennsylvania. In fierce battles like Fort Wagner, South Carolina, where the all-black 54th Massachusetts Regiment led a heroic charge against overwhelming Confederate firepower, the black troops proved themselves to be as brave as any soldiers in the world.

missed it entirely.) The South went to war to win its independence and to preserve the enslavement of its principal working class — black men and women. But the South's quest for independence underscored its dependence on black labor and black loyalty and set in motion a social upheaval that proved impossible to contain.

Neither side had anticipated the transformation of the Civil War into a struggle over the meaning of freedom in America. For the 4 million newly freed slaves, the critical question they asked at the moment of emancipation, "How free is free?" remained unresolved. Only months before issuing the proclamation, Lincoln had warned a black delegation at the White House that the abolition of slavery would leave unaltered the fundamental racial attitudes of white Americans. The fierce racial clashes that broke out during and after the war, in places like New York, Memphis and New Orleans — aimed at solidifying white supremacy — were forceful reminders that the president knew his people all too well. "You ask what am I grumbling about," a black clergyman wrote in January 1863. "Has not the president issued his emancipation proclamation? Yes, he has, but the hearts of the people have not. The presi-

dent has, but the country has not."

What the white South lost on the battlefields of the Civil War it would ultimately retake through terrorism, murder and legal repression. Nearly a century later, on some new battlefields — Selma, Birmingham, Jackson, Little Rock, Montgomery, Chicago, Los Angeles — still another struggle would be waged over the meaning of freedom in America. That struggle, that conflict persists. How free is free? ■

*Leon Litwack is the Alexander F. and May T. Morrison Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley. His books include North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 (1961), Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century (1988), The United States: Becoming a World Power (Seventh edition, 1991) and Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (1980), which won the Pulitzer Prize, the American Book Award, the Francis Parkman Prize and the Gold Medal of the Commonwealth Club of California. He is presently completing a work on race relations in the South from 1890 to World War I.*



# THE MAN OF OUR REDEEMER

BY NOAH GRIFFIN

Americans are fascinated by Abraham Lincoln.

He is, perhaps, the most beloved figure in American history. Far more than George Washington, Lincoln is our mythical father: a wise, stooped, suffering leader who expressed the country's highest aspirations in prose of unsurpassed beauty, and who devoted himself — and in the end gave the last full measure of devotion — to two great tasks: saving the Union and freeing the slaves.

The sheer volume of writings about the 16th president of the United States attests to the persistence of our obsession with him: there are more than 5,000 biographical titles on Lincoln.

But in the last few years, historians have begun to chip away at Lincoln's pedestal. Serious questions have been raised about his motivations and beliefs. Was he truly the Great Emancipator, an idealist who opposed slavery because it was evil — or merely a shrewd politician, a pragmatist concerned with holding the Union together at all costs?

Lincoln was certainly not an abolitionist. When *New York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley reproached him

for not having freed the slaves, in a famous mid-1862 editorial entitled the "Prayer of Twenty Million," Lincoln responded in a letter, "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and it is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it, and if I

could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union."

Lincoln's attitude toward slavery mirrored that of most Northerners. As W.E.B. DuBois showed in his classic work *Black Reconstruction*, the abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass understood that the Civil War was indeed fought over slavery, but with this twist: "The South wanted to take it out of the Union and the North wanted to leave it in."

The Emancipation Proclamation reflected Lincoln's caution. The Jan. 1, 1863, proclamation freed the slaves in Confederate states, but did not affect those in the border states — an action consistent with his earlier refusal to accept Gen. Fremont

and Gen. Hunter's orders that all slaves in liberated areas be freed.

Without taking Lincoln's shrewd sense of tactics into account, or the tenor of the times in which he lived, Frederick Douglass' gloomy early assessment of Lincoln as a man "willing to sacrifice blacks for the benefit of white people" seems all too accurate.

But Lincoln's seemingly halting and tentative actions were carefully thought out. A keen fol-

lower of the public mood, he feared that any openly abolitionist moves might drive border slave states into the Confederacy.

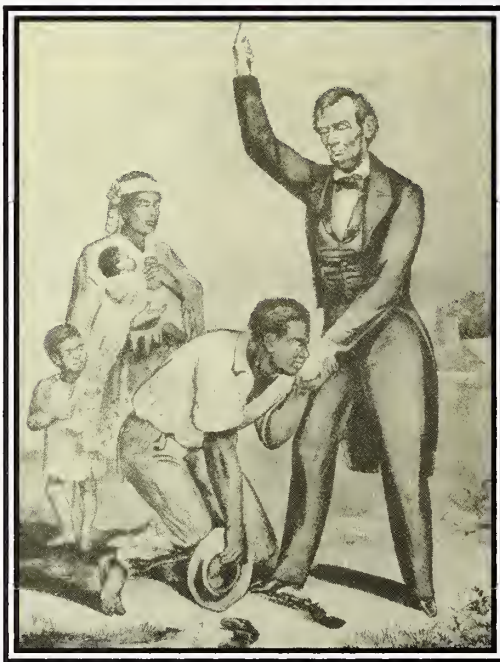
In fact, throughout his presidency Lincoln moved inexorably against slavery. On April 16, 1862, he freed the slaves in the District of Columbia. Eight days later, he concluded a treaty with the United Kingdom for the suppression of the



African slave trade. In June of 1862, Congress passed an act outlawing slavery in the territories; this was followed by the Confiscation Act, which freed all slaves who crossed the Union lines whose masters were convicted of treason. And earlier, although worried about the border states, Lincoln approved Gen. Ben Butler's legal construction holding that slaves captured in war would be considered contraband of war and therefore not be returned to their masters — a concept just short of emancipation itself.

But Frederick Douglass still had reason to doubt Lincoln's commitment to the principle of "liberty and justice for all." When black leaders gathered at the White House, the president pushed his recolonization proposal, the "Chiriqui plan." Lincoln felt that white acceptance of black emancipation hinged on blacks agreeing to recolonize in either Haiti, Central America or Liberia — an outcome he felt was preferable to swarms of freed men, women and children migrating to the North in search of work or remaining in the South where they would never be welcomed or accepted as equals.

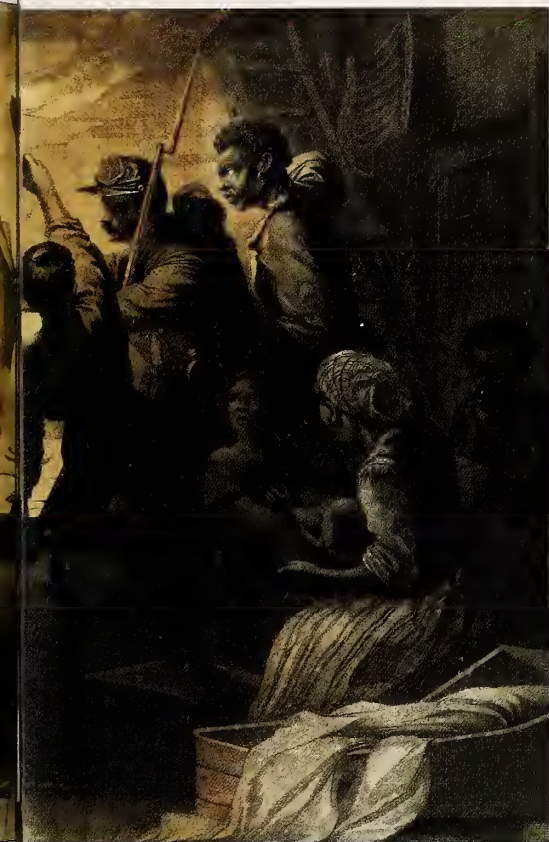
Lincoln was a gradualist. But his prag-



This patronizing Currier & Ives lithograph portrayed Lincoln as a modern Moses.



# EMPTION



A sentimental contemporary depiction of a Union soldier reading the Emancipation Proclamation to a slave household, above.

matism was also the soil which nourished his idealism. Although his ultimate goal was to preserve the Union, he had detested slavery ever since he was a young man, when he had seen a young mulatto girl on the auction block in New Orleans. He fought to save the Union, but he also tried to strike blows for freedom even before emancipation and the 13th Amendment.

One should not forget the last lines of his letter to Greeley: "I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free."

There are those who see the Emancipation Proclamation as a measure inspired purely by military necessity. White enlistments had fallen off, and the act permitted recruitment of blacks. It also hurt the South by taking away the slave labor force that had allowed many of their young men to remain in uniform.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, 180,000 blacks enlisted in the military. They fought to secure the blessings of liberty for themselves, their offspring and generations yet unborn. Lincoln recognized their crucial contribution — "You give the South 200,000 additional soldiers and they will have won this thing in two weeks!" — but their impact on the war has still not been fully appreciated.

By early July 1863, when patrols of the Union and Confederate armies stumbled upon each other outside a small Pennsylvania town called Gettysburg, there was no turning back. Nor was there any hesitation by the president. In the Gettysburg Address, delivered in November, the President shifted the underlying meaning of the great conflict from the narrow constitutional question of unlawful secession to the grand ideals of freedom and equality stated in the Declaration of Independence. It was, as Garry Wills points out in *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, a moment that changed the young nation forever.

What was won on the battlefield was secured on the floor of Congress when the 13th Amendment — forever outlawing slavery — was passed on Jan. 31, 1865. It should be noted that the original 13th Amendment, passed by Congress, would have constitutionally affirmed the right of slavery to exist had it been ratified by the states. It was superseded only by the outbreak of the Civil War.

What, then, is one to make of this complex man, this hardened realist who forever changed the nation's understanding of itself, this grand idealist who only slowly and reluctantly took measures against an evil institution?

Ultimately Abraham Lincoln must be measured by a simple test: Did he meet the challenge of his times?

It is easy to criticize Lincoln for moving too slowly. But it is also easy to forget that at the war's outbreak no one would have fought for emancipation. Politics is the art of the possible engineered by proponents of the practicable, and Lincoln was a master politician. His plodding pragmatism accomplished his public goal of saving the Union, but it did more: It fulfilled his personal quest to free the slave. By any yardstick, he passed the test.

In the end, even Frederick Douglass came to admit it: "... the how and the man of our redemption ... met in the man of Abraham Lincoln." ■

Noah Griffin is an Examiner columnist. His "Noah Griffin Show" airs Sundays at midnight on KFRC-FM.

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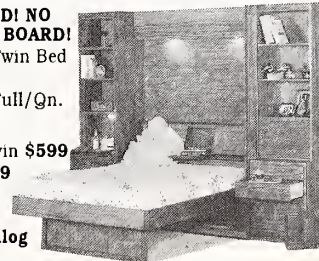
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# LINCOLN UP C

Not the god of establishment priests, but a literary genius called upon to

BY GORE VIDAL

**O**nce, at the Library of Congress in Washington, I was shown the contents of Lincoln's pockets on the night that he was shot at Ford's Theater. There was a Confederate bank note, perhaps acquired during the president's recent excursion to the fallen capital, Richmond; a pocket knife; a couple of newspaper cuttings (good notices for his administration); and two pairs of spectacles. It was eerie to hold in one's hand what looked to be the same spectacles that he wore as he was photographed reading the Second Inaugural Address, the month before his murder. One of the wire "legs" of the spectacles had broken off, and someone, presumably Lincoln himself, had clumsily repaired it with a piece of darning wool. I tried on the glasses: He was indeed farsighted, and what must have been to him the clearly printed lines "let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds" was to my myopic eyes a gray quartzlike blur.

Next I was shown the Bible which the president had kissed as he swore his second oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States; the oath that he often used, in lieu of less spiritual argument, to justify the war that he had fought to preserve the Union. The Bible is small and beautifully bound. To the consternation of the custodian, I opened the book. The pages were as bright and clear as the day they were printed; in fact, they stuck together in such a way as to suggest that no one had ever even rifled them. Obviously the book had been sent for at the last moment; then given away, to become a treasured relic.

Although Lincoln belonged to no Christian church, he did speak of the "Almighty" more and more often as the war progressed. During the congressional election of 1846, Lincoln had been charged with "infidelity" to Christianity. At the time, he made a rather lawyerly response. To placate those who insisted that presi-

dents must be devout monotheists (preferably Christian and Protestant), Lincoln allowed that he himself could never support "a man for office, whom I knew to be an open enemy of, and scoffer at, religion." The key word, of course, is "open." As usual, Lincoln does not lie — something that the Jesuits maintain no wise man does — but he shifts the argument to his own advantage and gets himself off the atheistical hook much as Thomas Jefferson had done almost a century earlier.

Last, I was shown a life mask, made shortly before the murder. The hair on the head had been tightly covered over, the whiskers greased. When the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens first saw it, he thought it was a *death* mask, so worn and remote is the face. I was most startled by the smallness of the head. In photographs, with hair and beard, the head had seemed in correct proportion to Lincoln's great height. But this vulpine little face seems strangely vulnerable. The cheeks are sunken in. The nose is sharper than in the photographs, and the lines about the wide thin mouth are deep. With eyes shut, he looks to be a small man, in rehearsal for his death.

Those who knew Lincoln always thought it a pity that there was never a photograph of him truly smiling. A non-user of tobacco, he had splendid teeth for that era, and he liked to laugh, and when he did, Philip Hone noted, the tip of his nose moved like a tapir's.

Gertrude Stein used to say that U.S. Grant had the finest American prose style. The general was certainly among our best writers, but he lacked music (Gertrude lacked it too, but she did have rhythm). Lincoln deployed the plain style as masterfully as Grant; and he does have music. In fact, there is now little argument that Lincoln is one of the great masters of prose in our language, and the only surprising aspect of so demonstrable a fact is that there are those who still affect surprise. Partly this is due to the Education Mafia that has taken over what little culture the United States has, and partly to the sort of cranks

who maintain that since Shakespeare had little Latin and less Greek and did not keep company with kings, he could never have written so brilliantly of kings and courts, and so not he but some great lord wrote the plays in his name.

For all practical purposes, Lincoln had no formal education. But he studied law, which meant not only reading Blackstone (according to Jeremy Bentham, a writer "cold, reserved and wary, exhibiting a frigid pride"), but brooding over words in themselves and in combination. In those days, most good lawyers, like good generals, wrote good prose; if they were not precisely understood, a case or a battle might be lost.

William Herndon was Lincoln's law partner in Springfield, Ill., from 1844 to Feb. 18, 1861, when Lincoln went to Washington to be inaugurated president. Herndon is the principal source for Lincoln's pre-presidential life. He is a constant embarrassment to Lincoln scholars because they must rely on him, yet since Lincoln is the national deity, they must omit a great deal of Herndon's testimony about Lincoln. For one thing, Lincoln was something of a manic-depressive, to use current jargon. In fact, there was a time when, according to Herndon, Lincoln was "as 'crazy as a loon' in this city in 1841." Since this sort of detail does not suit the history departments, it is usually omitted or glossed over, or poor Herndon is accused of telling lies.

The Lincoln of the hagiographers is forever serene and noble, in defeat as well as in victory. With perfect hindsight, they maintain that it was immediately apparent that the Lincoln-Douglas contest had opened wide the gates of political opportunity for Lincoln. Actually, after Lincoln's defeat by Douglas for the U.S. Senate, he was pretty loonlike for a time; and he thought that the gates of political opportunity had slammed shut for him. Lincoln's friend Henry C. Whitney, in a letter to Herndon, wrote:

*I shall never forget the day — January 6, 1859 — I went to your office and found Lincoln there alone. He appeared to be somewhat dejected — in fact I nev-*



# CLOSE

to live out a high tragedy

*er saw a man so depressed. I tried to rally his drooping spirits ... but with ill success. He was simply steeped in gloom. For a time he was silent ... blurting out as he sank down: 'Well, whatever happens I expect everyone to desert me now, but Billy Herndon.'*

Despite the busyness of the Lincoln priests, the rest of us can still discern the real Lincoln by entering his mind through what he wrote, a seductive business, by and large, particularly when he shows us unexpected views of the familiar. Incidentally, to read Lincoln's letters in holograph is revelatory; the writing changes dramatically with his mood. In the eloquent, thought-out letters to mourners for the dead, he writes a clear firm hand. When the governor of Massachusetts, John A. Andrew, in the summer of 1862 wrote that he could not send troops because his paymasters were incapable of "quick work," Lincoln replied, "Please say to these gentlemen that if they do not work quickly I will make quick work of them. In the name of all that is reasonable, how long does it take to pay a couple of regiments?" The words tumble from Lincoln's pen in uneven rows upon the page, and one senses not only his fury but his terror that the city of Washington might soon fall to the rebels.

Since 1920 no American president has written his state speeches; lately, many of our presidents seem to experience some difficulty in reading aloud what others have written for them to say. But until Woodrow Wilson suffered a stroke, it was assumed that the chief task of the first magistrate was to report to the American people, in their Congress assembled, upon the state of the Union. The president was elected not only to execute the laws but to communicate to the people his vision of the prospect before us. As a reporter to the people, Lincoln surpassed all presidents. Even in his youthful letters and speeches, he is already himself. The prose is austere and sharp; there are few adjectives and adverbs; and then, suddenly, sparks of humor.

*Fellow Citizens — It will be but a very few words that I shall undertake to say.*



**Pensive president:** Lincoln is captured in 1862 by an unknown photographer.

*I was born in Kentucky, raised in Indiana and lived in Illinois. And now I am here, where it is my business to care equally for the good people of all the States...There are but few views or aspects of this great war upon which I have not said or written something whereby my own opinions might be known. But there is one — the recent attempts of our erring brethren, as they are sometimes called — to employ the Negro to fight for them. I have neither written nor made a speech on that subject, because that was their business, not mine; and if I had a wish upon the subject I had not the power to introduce it, or make it effective. The great question*

*with them was, whether the negro, being put into the army, would fight for them. I do not know, and therefore cannot decide. They ought to know better than we. I have in my lifetime heard many arguments why the negroes ought to be slaves; but if they fight for those who would keep them in slavery it will be a better argument than any I have yet heard. He who will fight for that ought to be a slave. They have concluded at last to take one out of four of the slaves, and put them in the army; and that one out of the four who will fight to keep the others in slavery ought to be a slave himself unless he is killed in a fight. While I have often said that all men*



*ought to be free, yet I would allow those colored persons to be slaves who want to be; and next to them those white persons who argue in favor of making other people slaves. I am in favor of giving an opportunity to such white men to try it on for themselves.*

Also, as a lawyer on circuit, Lincoln was something of a stand-up comedian, able to keep an audience laughing for hours as he appeared to improvise his stories; actually, he claimed no originality as "I am a re-tailer."

Lincoln did not depend very much on others for help when it came to the writing of the great papers. Secretary of State William Seward gave him a line or two for the coda of the First Inaugural Address, while the poetry of Shakespeare and the prose of the King James version of the Bible were so much in Lincoln's blood that he occasionally slipped into iambic pentameter.

The Annual Message to Congress, Dec., 1, 1862, has echoes of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* (ominously, Lincoln's favorite play):

*We can not escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation.*

A few years earlier, at Brown University, Lincoln's young secretary, John Hay, wrote a valedictory poem. Of his class's common memories, "Our hearts shall bear them safe through life's commotion/Their fading gleam shall light us to our graves." But of course, *Macbeth* had said long before Hay, "And all our yesterdays have lighted fools/The way to dusty death."

Of Lincoln's contemporaries, William Herndon has given us the best close-up view of the man that he had shared an office with for 17 years. "He was the most continuous and severest thinker in America. He read but little and that for an end. Politics were his Heaven, and his Hades metaphysics." As for the notion that Lincoln was a gentle, humble, holy man, even John Hay felt obliged to note that "no great man was ever modest. It was (Lincoln's) intellectual arrogance and unconscious assumption of superiority that men like Chase and Sumner could never forgive." Along with so much ambition and secretiveness of nature, Lincoln also had an impish sense of humor; he liked to read aloud comic writers like Petroleum V. Nasby, and he told comic stories to divert,

if not others, himself from the ongoing tragedy at whose center he was.

What was it like to be in the audience when Lincoln made a speech? What did he really look like? What did he sound like? To the first question we have the photographs; but they are motionless. He was 6 feet 4, "more or less stoop-shouldered," wrote Herndon. "He was very tall, thin, and gaunt....When he first began speaking, he was shrill, squeaking, piping, unpleasant; his general look, his form, his pose, the color of flesh, wrinkled and dry, his sensitiveness, and his momentary diffidence, everything seemed to be against him." Then, "he gently and gradually warmed up...voice became harmonious, melodious, musical, if you please, with face somewhat aglow...Lincoln's gray eyes would flash fire when speaking against slavery or spoke volumes of hope and love when speaking of liberty, justice and the progress of mankind."

Of Lincoln's politics, Herndon wrote, he "was a conscientious conservative; he believed in Law and Order. See his speech before Springfield Lyceum in 1838." This speech is indeed a key to Lincoln's character, for it is here that he speaks of the nature of ambition and how, in a republic that was already founded, a tyrant might be tempted to reorder the state in his own image. At the end Lincoln himself did just that. There is a kind of terrible Miltonian majesty in his address to the doubtless puzzled young men of the Springfield Lyceum. In effect, their 29-year-old contemporary was saying that for the ambitious man, it is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.

In the end, whether or not Lincoln's personal ambition undid him and the nation is immaterial. He took a divided house and jammed it back together. He was always a pro-Union man. As for slavery, he was averse, rather than adverse, to the institution but no Abolitionist. Lincoln's eulogy on Henry Clay (July 6, 1852) is to the point. Of Clay, Lincoln wrote:

*As a politician or statesman, no one was so habitually careful to avoid all sectional ground. Whatever he did, he did for the whole country. ...x Feeling as he did, and as the truth surely is, that the world's best hope depended on the continued union of the States, he was ever jealous of, and watchful for, whatever might have the slightest tendency to separate them.*

He supports Clay's policy of colonizing the blacks elsewhere; today any mention of Lincoln's partiality for this scheme amuses black historians and makes many

of the white ones deal economically with the truth.

Eight years later, the eulogist, now the president, promptly made war on those states that had chosen to depart the Union on the same high moral ground that Lincoln himself had so eloquently stated at the time of the Mexican War in 1848: "Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up, and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better." Lawyer Lincoln would probably have said, rather bleakly, that the key phrase here was "and having the power." The Confederacy did not have the power; 600,000 men died from 1861 to 1865, and the Confederacy was smashed and Lincoln was murdered.

In a sense, we have had three republics. The first, a loose confederation of former British colonies, lasted from 1776 to 1789, when the first Congress under the Constitution met. The second republic ended April 9, 1865, with the South's surrender. In due course Lincoln's third republic was transformed (inevitably?) into the national security state where we have been locked up for 40 years. A fourth republic might be nice.

In any event, for better or worse, we still live in the divided house that Lincoln cobbled together for us, and it is always useful to get to know through his writing not the god of the establishment-priests but a literary genius who was called upon to live, rather than merely to write, a high tragedy. I can think of no one in literary or political history quite like this essential American writer. ■

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Today's crossword solution:

AT	MO	RI	SE	AL	AS				
IT	SO	CK	PE	R	L	M	A	N	
CH	IL	D	S	O	C	K	O	L	O
GA	EL	N	A	S	T	A	U	N	T
M	I	N	D	C	Y	P	P	I	C
OX	O	S	A	F	E	S	O	C	K
AR	F	E	L	S	M	O	R	I	
SO	C	K	S	O	P	H	O	N	E
I	N	C	A	R	O	U	S	T	
H	O	O	K	E	A	I	M	I	N
S	O	F	F	E	R	I	N	S	O
S	O	N	O	S	T	R	A	T	O
L	O	C	A	L	S	A	S	S	
O	C	K	D	I	M	T	H	E	S
M	K	T	S	B	O	A	Q	E	I
GA	H	S	S	O	C	K	L	E	N
J	E	E	P	L	O	A	M	O	
E	A	R	A	P	A	R	T	O	
R	W	A	N	D	A	N	Y	S	O
R	E	P	O	R	T	S	O	C	K
A	I	R	E	S	S	K	Y	I	S

## From the Negro's Point of View

BY CHANDLER OWEN.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Lincoln was a philosophic seer. He saw far ahead of his time. On slavery, war, alcoholic drink and labor, he visioned the change which actually has come.

When pressed to close the war, to stop the cruelty and bloodshed, he replied, "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war will quickly pass away. Yet if God Almighty wills it, then all the wearh piled by the bondsmen's 250 years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and every drop of blood drawn, with the lash shall be paid for by another drawn with the sword." This was what did happen in the civil war. The flower of southern manhood was bl'd to death and the whole of Dixie impoverished.

Upon the other burning question of the day, wet and dry, Lincoln was emphatically dry. On Washington's birthday, 1842, he delivered a temperance address in Springfield, Ill., from which I quote the following message: "And when the victory shall be complete, when there shall be neither a slave nor a drunkard on earth how proud will be the title of that land which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those revolutions that shall have ended in that victory."

Emancipation from chattel slavery, emancipation from British domination, emancipation from liquor, were all viewed as revolutions by Lincoln. Notice how he compares the

revolution of 1776 and the prohibition of alcohol: "In it we shall find a stronger bondage broken, a viler slavery manumitted, a greater tyrant deposed; in it more of want supplied, more disease healed, more sorrow assuaged. By it no orphans starving, no widows weeping. By it none wounded in feeling, none injured in interest. Even the dram-maker and the dramseller will have glided into other occupations so gradually as never to have felt the change and will stand ready to join all others in the universal song of gladness." And sure enough the brewers have become large manufacturers of soft drinks.

When Lincoln made a temperance speech at the South Fork schoolhouse of Sangamon county in 1847, he drew from his pocket a total abstinence pledge. He signed it and requested his audience to do likewise. The Anti-Saloon league, a half century later, used this pledge in securing 6,000,000 signers.

Lincoln always felt that the closest bond should exist between working men—a glimpse into the modern labor movement. "Let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father," was another Lincoln epigram.

When we reflect on what a large part the questions of the Negro, liquor, labor and lawlessness play in our modern life, then is it that we more truly realize the greatness and vision and genuine worth of Abraham Lincoln.



# PERPETUATE LINCOLN IDEA

New York, Feb. 12.—Signatures of many prominent men and women attached to a call issued today for a "National Lincoln conference" on the negro question. The order of the conference as outlined in the call, is a full discussion of present evils, and to awaken a renewed interest and activity in behalf of the colored race, and to secure it perfect equality. The question is put in the call: "How far has the nation lived up to the obligation imposed upon it by the Emancipation proclamation?" It deprecates "the trend of lawless attacks upon the negro, north, south and west," and says: "Silence, under these conditions, means tacit approval." "If Mr. Lincoln was to revisit this country in the flesh," continues the call, "he would be disappointed and discouraged. He would learn that on January 1, 1909, Georgia had rounded out a new confederacy by disfranchising the negro after the manner of all the other southern states. He would learn that the Supreme court of the United States, supposedly a bulwark of American liberties, had refused every opportunity to pass squarely upon this disfranchisement of millions by laws avowedly discriminatory." Among the signers of the call are: Miss Jane Addams, Chicago; Samuel Bowles, Springfield, Mass.; Mrs. Ida Wells Barnett, Chicago; William Lloyd Garrison, Boston; Professor W. E. B. Dubois, Atlanta; Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, Chicago, and many prominent New Yorkers.





